LITURGY AND ILLUSION:
THE SPECTATOR AND THE FRENCH THEATRE
FROM HARDY TO HORACE

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INTRODUCTION

From the Renaissance to the present day literary creativity in France has been accompanied, variously to its advantage and disadvantage, by innumerable sage theories as to what the creator should really be doing. At times the artist and the theorist are one and the same, as in most prefaces, many *Examens* and *Notes*. More often the latter is a critic, himself not directly involved in the creative labour, or at most a mediocre artist. Such is especially true of the seventeenth century, and it leads one to suppose that the connection between the theories and the practice is less close than has been generally believed. There are, indeed, very good reasons why the theory should differ somewhat from the practice, since their roots were quite distinct.

Despite the wide currency of the "adaptations" of Aristotle's *Poetics* by Castelvetro, Scaliger and the rest during the sixteenth century, their effect on theatrical output was immediate only in certain cases, and in the very restricted milieu of the schools. The theory, in fact, was poetic rather than dramatic, and had little theatrical application for the very good reason that it was formulated virtually in a void. As far as the public it could reach was concerned it preceded the practice, and since, for the most part, it did not stress theatricality, it led to the production of versified dialogue or monologue which the "actor" orated on stage. The output of Jodelle, Mellin de Saint-Gelais, Antoine de Baïf and even Grévin was played by scholars and poets for an audience composed of the same. Added to the restricted effect of the theory, then, was the very fact that the theorists were their own audience, far from the vast public of the mysteries, farces and sotties. It would be difficult, furthermore, to support any view that they were even interested in introducing this wide public to classical theatre. It is clear that there were at least two quite different audiences: one of "vulgar" taste, the other more refined but excessively restricted; and it is scarcely surprising that the theories of the latter should be without effect on the entertainment of the former.

This separation had to start to break down during the wars of religion. With the disappearance of wealthy patrons who had supported them previously, those authors desiring to produce something other than simple entertainment for the masses were forced to turn in that very direction in order to make a living.[1] This meant less concern for high-sounding theories and more thought for the lowlier aspirations of the general public.

Since, for the time being, writing for a non-paying public became the pastime of those with other income, since the type of prospective patron returning from the wars was somewhat rougher than his predecessor and doubtless interested in sport more lusty than that provided by the scholarly theatre, the critics had also to turn towards the only meaningful theatre left. This occurred towards the early 1630's, when the aristocracy began to become interested again, and finally brought the two publics together.

Until then the wider one, as Hardy notes in the Epitre addressed to Payen before Theagene et Cariclee, remained the more important:

> Mais que ceux là [the critics] so representent que
> tout ce qu'aprouue l'usage et qui plait au public deuient
> plus que legitime.[2]

The same feeling is reflected in Ogier's later claim in his preface to Schélandre's Tyr et Sidon (1628) that a play should be written entirely "pour le plaisir et le divertissement." The argument between whether pleasure or social and moral utility was the proper aim of the theatre was to continue throughout the century, becoming more violent once the two publics started viewing the same plays in the same theatre from the mid-1620's on.[3] The Aristotelian and the Horatian theories from Chapelain to Boileau were to come into conflict with the practice, as represented in Ogier's famous preface, in Scudéry's prefaces to Ligdamon et Lidias and Andromire (but not his Apologie), and other pieces of theory.

The appearance of Mairet's Sophonisbe in 1634 changed the comparative indifference of practice to the theories only insofar as it presented a successful model; and despite the later claims made for Le Cid, it is hard to see how this last play can really be said to have adopted the unities and other "necessities" of the "classical" stage, while at the time its success was entirely popular, not critical. Few plays of the period reveal much concern for the theories. Later, Corneille will more-or-less follow the rules most of the time, and Racine with his secular plays; but success according to the rules was never more common than without them: indeed, the younger Corneille's Timocrate, the greatest success of the century, harks back more to the Scudérys and the Mairets than it does to his brother's Horace. Lough has pointed out that the dramatists then seemed to have "a greater freedom and range" than did those of the next century.[4] Borgerhoff has confirmed this by showing how much of a struggle it was for the dramatists of the first half of the eighteenth century to break away from certain fixed ideas they held about the theatre, based upon the practice of Racine and the theories of Boileau alone.[5]

The purpose of this too brief résumé has been to suggest that despite the commonly held view that seventeenth century drama is entirely classical -- in the confining sense of abiding by the unities and bienséances as formulated by Chapelain and Sarasin, by the abbé d'Aubignac and La Mesnardière -- the true state of affairs is otherwise. By far the greatest proportion of the dramatic output is due to authors other than Corneille the elder and Racine. The obedience of these authors to the theoreticians is wavering, to say the least, while the very economics of the theatre oblige them to pay attention to the demands of a wider public. If the style of these lesser authors changes little during the century, it nonetheless answers a certain need in the public, and so has its significance; what is more important for the present study is that it is from this style that, at a certain moment in time, the so-called "classical" theatre came.

The authors of that moment have met with little critical examination in depth, with the exception of Rotrou, who has been receiving ever more interest in recent years, perhaps Tristan (although he is really a little later) and, of course, Corneille. Until very recently they have even been dismissed as not meriting such study. Biographical and historical studies are rampant, and are often considerable, but they should be only a beginning. This leaves a serious gap in theatrical history, since it has led to a neglect of the precise nature of the changes which took place in the theatre and assumes that the theories simply became practice over the twenty or more years between the mid-1620's and the mid-40's or 50's. In fact the theories, as suggested, never held the practice in monopoly, however immense their effect.

The change in the theatre over this period is undisputed, and if it cannot be defined as a change from "baroque" to "classical" in the sense of travelling from wildness to unity, purity of form, and whatever other adjectives have been ascribed to the concept, how may it be described? It may be possible to discover something other than a purely structural or linguistic change, and to describe it in terms at once more comprehensive and more accurate.

The one element of the play which seems to have been ignored, if not in its existence, then in its effect upon the play itself and upon the dramatist, is the spectator: the spectator not as the recipient of the play's moral or as the object of the entertaining and pleasing effects of the production, but as an integral part of what Sartre and others call the "ritual" of the theatre.[6] Thus, in the present account, the text itself will be considered as of no more nor less importance in the total experience than movement, decoration, actor, spectator and the other elements from which the theatre is made. While the spectator may be no more important than any other single element taken alone, his inclusion in this kind of study may enable us to obtain a better idea of the kind of relationship sought between the elements, and so to define a style and understand a type of theatre.

The superficial "irrelevance" of the theatre in the years 1625-

1640, with which too much criticism has taken issue, is of no account. Indeed, this will be one of the major points: that if we seek the meaning of the theatre (thinking particularly of the three moments with which the present study is concerned) in the plots and schemes most apparent to the reader, we misjudge it. Searching in the total experience we will come nearer to the real spirit of the separate theatrical moments and of the evolution which resulted in the budding of the "classical" theatre.

NOTES

[1] Maurice Descotes, *Le Public de théâtre et son histoire* (Paris: PUF., 1964), 27.

[2] Alexandre Hardy, *Les Chastes et loyalles amours de Theagene et Cariclee* . . . (Paris: Jacques Quesnel, 1623), ã iij.

[3] See Descotes, *op. cit.*, Ch. III, 57-90.

[4] John Lough, *Paris Theatre Audiences in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: OUP., 1957), 162.

[5] E. B. O. Borgerhoff, *The Evolution of Liberal Theory and Practice in the French Theater 1680-1757* (Princeton: PUP., 1936).

[6] See e.g., Jean-Paul Sartre, "Forgers of Myths. The Young Playwrights of France," *Theatre Arts*, XXX, 6 (June 1946), 324-335.

I. THE CRITICS AND THE THEATRE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

A. The doctrine of verisimilitude and the problem of aesthetic distance

> La représentation n'est pas une sorte d'épisode qui s'ajoute à l'oeuvre; la représentation tient à l'essence meme du théâtre; l'oeuvre dramatique est faite pour être représentée: cette intention la définit.[1]

This essence of which Henri Gouhier speaks is the relatively simple notion that the theatrical act has two attributes found in no other art simultaneously: it is both "présence et présent." It has the effect of a reality in action, because the actor is as real as the spectator, because he is in fact present in our midst, at the same time as being a contemporary action. Not only do we see a real action taking place on the stage, but this action must be a present one, since it is occurring before our eyes. This means that illusion is built into the theatre, it does not have to be consciously sought by the men of the theatre: all they have to seek is the precise nature of the illusion they want to foster.

Since, of all the arts, the theatre comes nearest to breaking down the barriers between illusion and reality, it is scarcely surprising that critics of all ages have paid it considerable attention, with the result that our heritage of writings on the theatre is now inordinately large. Oddly enough, however, it is not until very recently that we find any attempt to discover a complete aesthetic of the theatre; perhaps, in France at least, Diderot is the first to do so.

Certainly, and evidently, most writings on the theatre will contain some insight into the precise way it affects the spectator, but, until the eighteenth century, these are little more than slight interruptions in tracts on how to write. During the seventeenth century in France these insights were already beginning to occupy the tracts more, while the craft of pay building took a proportionately smaller part (although as the tracts grew longer this does not mean they are brief!). This is why Bray, in his *Formation de la doctrine classique en France*, is able to contrast the sixteenth century "arts poétiques" with the seventeenth century "théories poétiques," and why, in the present study, a brief examination of the critics is called for.[2] (However, since we are studying a change in the nature of theatrical illusion we must needs examine at much greater length the dramatists, who were more directly involved, and the plays themselves with the circumstances surrounding their performance, where the problems and changes are most visible.)

In our own time the search for a clearly defined stand in the theatre *vis à vis* the public has been much in evidence and at times quite vehement: an Antoine or a Maeterlinck, Jarry, Apollinaire, Wilder, and his master, Pirandello, Brecht, Shaw, the Cartel and the later so-called "theatre of the absurd," the English "kitchen sink," the American "happening," and so on; yet none of these, either in effect or in vehemence, equalled the ferment in the French theatre in the thirty years between 1620 and 1650.

What was the result of this ferment?

> L'instruction morale assignée comme but à la poésie,
> la foi dans l'art et dans la règle, le culte de la

> raison, les dogmes de l'imitation de la nature et de l'imitation des Anciens, voilà le credo de l'esthétique classique, les fondements de toute la doctrine.[3]

Thus Bray sums up his chapters on the origins and foundations of the classical doctrine. Yet these bases in no way amount to an aesthetic. They precede the work of art; describing how and why the work should be created, they do not attempt to explain the perhaps more complex problems which a complete aesthetic must pose as to what happens to a work after its presentation to the public, better: during its presentation to the public. How does the work react on the spectator? is a question that must be answered not only in terms of its moral function, but in those more delicate ones of a psychological or aesthetic exchange between the work and the spectator, of how great a part the latter has in the creation of the work of art.[4] It is a question to which an answer should be sought since it will affect the very nature of the work of art.

Because the basic general rule of classical doctrine was that of verisimilitude,[5] it is somewhat surprising that the relationship between play and spectator at this level is only slightly touched on and never developed in the theoretical writings of the seventeenth century. Public opinion must be the authors' guide, and public reaction their standard, only insofar as public mores must not be offended by the behaviour of those on stage. Broadly speaking, verisimilitude becomes the medium in which the basic "credo" must be cast in order to convince the public.

How little most theoreticians take into account the inclusion of the spectator in a kind of overall theatrical experience is demonstrated by the very fact that from Deimier (Académie de l'Art poétique - 1610) to Chapelain, and through almost all the classical critics and theorists, the notion of verisimilitude is reduced from Aristotle's belief that anything which appears possible or which one thinks to be possible is good for the stage,[6] to a belief essentially governed, as Bray puts it, by the notion of what is within reason: the simply possible becomes scorned, and it is on these grounds (among others) that Scudéry, for example, criticizes the Cid.

The imagination seems often to become confused with the reasoning faculties. For Mairet the credibility of the stage action should not strain the imagination of the spectator.[7] For him, imagination does not enable us to jump temporal or spatial barriers (which is a function of memory), and it should not be forced to attempt to do so by the nature of the play. If the spectator is made to create, as it were, his own verisimilitude he will be too occupied to be moved by the play. The imagination must be helped into the illusion by vraisemblance, it should be able to accept the play as "real" from the outset, not impelled first to justify the illusion. The implication of this is that the spectator must find the play credible so that he may the more easily enter into the action. The changes we shall later examine from Hardy's Mariamne and Panthée to Tristan's Mariane and Panthée are evidence of this effort.

This belief later becomes explicit, for, it will be claimed, it is only when the emotions are deeply involved in the action that the moral teaching of the play can truly be passed on to the spectator. Rapin, for whom "l'intention principale de cet Art est . . . de rendre agreable, ce qui est salutaire,"[8] continues to add some interesting pages:

> La Tragedie ne devient agreable au spectateur que parce qu'il devient luy-mesme sensible à tout ce qu'on

> luy represente, qu'il entre dans tous les differens sentimens des acteurs, qu'il s'interesse dans leurs avantures, qu'il craint, et qu'il espere, qu'il s'afflige, et qu'il rejoüit avec eux. Le theatre est froid et languissant, dés qu'il cesse de produire ces mouvemens dans l'ame de ceux qui y assistent. . . . la crainte et la pitié sont celles qui font de plus grandes impressions sur le coeur de l'homme. . . En effet, dés que l'ame est ebranlée, par des mouvemens si naturels et si humains, toutes les impressions qu'elle ressent, luy deviennent agreables: Son trouble luy plaist, et ce qu'elle ressent d'emotion, est pour elle une espece de charme, qui la jette dans une douce et profonde resverie, et qui la fait entrer insensiblement dans tous les intérëts qui joüent sur le theatre. C'est alors que le coeur s'abandonne à tous les objets qu'on luy propose, que toutes les images le frappent, qu'il epouse les sentimens de tous ceux qui parlent, et qu'il devient susceptible à toutes les passions qu'on luy monstre: parce qu'il est émü.[9]

He tells how this was the effect on the spectator when "Mondory joüoit la Mariamne de Tristan au Marais," and how "le peuple n'en sortoit jamais que resveur et pensif," and it is clear that his ideal is of a theatre which, while emotionally placing the spectator in the play, not simply in sympathy with the characters but empathically involved in the action, also provokes him to reflect upon what he feels.

This does not mean that the intellect should meet with any appeal during the action of which it can be aware, rather the contrary: Balzac, Sarrasin, Chapelain, La Mesnardière, and the rest, are all strongly opposed to any such attempt. The moral teaching of the theatre for them lies in the spectator's reflection upon his emotions. Ideally, they see the spectator as totally involved in the action:

> Enfin l'Auditeur honneste homme, et capable des bonnes choses, entre dans tous les sentimens de la Personne theatrale qui touche ses inclinations. Il

> s'afflige quand elle pleure; il est gay lorsqu'elle est contente; si elle gémit, il soupire; il frémit, si elle se fasche; bref il suit tous ses mouvemens, et il ressent que son coeur est comme un champ de bataille, où la science du Poëte fait combattre quand il luy plaist mille Passions tumultueuses, et plus fortes que la raison.[10]

This desire to cause the spectator to confuse his emotions with those of the stage character is usually left implicit, but it can be seen at the base of the varied suggestions intended to bring a greater verisimilitude to the theatre. Thus, like Voltaire a century later,[11] La Mesnardière, d'Aubignac and Corneille all suggested that one ideal would be for the author to cause the actual time of the play and the supposed time of the action to coincide.[12] Corneille and La Mesnardière both reason themselves toward the drame bourgeois on the same grounds that Beaumarchais was later to use in his preface to Eugénie: that spectators of a lower social status would identify more easily with characters of their own level than with the more lofty ones of classical tragedy.[13]

These suggestions, like so many others,[14] all have as their aim the confounding of the spectator's emotions with those of the stage. Recently this relationship between stage and public has come in for consideration from philosophers, psychologists and critics alike, not to mention theatrical directors and others. Unfortunately, in most cases, they approach the problem with a definite bias in favour of some particular type of theatre; which takes many of these essays out of the area of description and into that of dogma, which simply leads to distortion. The one significant exception is M. Gouhier, but he is viewing the question from an angle somewhat different from ours, concerned as he is with the theatre in more general terms than this essay makes pretense to be.[15]

In the mind of any sensitive spectator of the theatre there is, suggests Bullough,[16] what may be termed a "psychical distance," whose effect is as though there were two distinct and separate parts of the mind, the one objective and the other subjective. The first acts as an intellectual and moral judge; the other, emotional, submits to the spell and enters into the theatrical action. While the second seems to be on the stage included in the action, the first looks on from a distance, and judges not only the action, its form and so on, but our own emotion, its effect and significance: it is this last situation which may be talked of as "psychical distance." How far these two parts are actually separate -- that is, the precise "distance" -- will depend necessarily on the type of audience, as well as the type of play. The more cerebral this audience the less easy will it be to push it into the stage action, the more purely emotional it is the harder it will be to cause the spectator to appreciate the play aesthetically or morally. (Thus, for example, Brecht would seem to need, if he does not actually demand, a more intellectual audience that he may obtain his famous Verfremdungseffekt, which he envisaged as having the greatest power for social instruction.) Total distancing, as Brecht's experience has shown, is just as rare as the reduction of distance to zero, when the spectator is entirely given over to the action, when he can make no kind of judgment because his "attitude est uniquement commandée par la force dramatique de l'événement."[17]

Yet it is towards the reduction of distance that most Western theatre seems to tend, relying perhaps on the unreality of the theatrical situation itself (its being in a theatre, on a stage) to maintain a distance. Fielding's Partridge may be more common than Büdel supposes:[18] his rarity is denied by examples ranging from Stendhal's tale of the soldier at Baltimore who took the somewhat extreme step of shooting at the actor playing Othello as he was about to kill Desdemona[19] to the child at a pantomime who shouts a warning to Whittington as King Rat approaches him from behind. For our present purpose, there is an even more significant example to be found in d'Aubignac's Pratique du théatre, when he praises Théophile's Pyrame et Thisbé for the emotion aroused as Pyrame goes to kill himself bewailing Thisbé whom he believes dead (although d'Aubignac is actually criticizing the long speech which precedes this), saying:

> j'ay veu dans cette occasion une jeune fille qui n'avoit encore jamais esté à la Comédie, dire à sa Mere, Qu'il falloit l'avertir que sa Maistresse n'estoit pas morte; tant il est vray que ce moment portoit les Spectateurs dans les interests de ce Personnage![20]

This seems to be the moment aimed for by the classical critics, not for its own sake, as we have seen in Rapin and La Mesnardière, but because later it will make the spectator meditate. This, too, is the opinion of Giraudoux, who, in his Impromptu de Paris, makes Jouvet suppose himself telling the spectator who goes through all kinds of mental and physical contortions while watching a play in order to understand it, "Ne vous donnez pas ce mal, cher Monsier. Vous n'avez qu'à attendre, vous le saurez demain!"

To achieve this empathy the play must maintain an even tone. If any incident or action, speech or spectacle is presented to the spectator which does not fit the general tone of the play, if, for example, a violently realistic murder were suddenly introduced into a fairy tale, or, to cite Jouvet talking of Auguste Renoir's disenchantment with a certain play, a too realistic piece of scenery is introduced into the set,[21] then the spell is immediately broken. The emotions may remain involved, but our judgment will withdraw as from a sudden absurdity (this being one of the comic principles).

This is why what is essentially the principal unity of the French classical critics is an unstated one: the unity of tone. For it was the ideal of the classical theorists that this distance should be reduced as described, so that the ideas and emotions of the poet might gain complete control over the spectator. Afterwards this spectator might break them down again to their moral and social precepts:

> Comme la pierre d'Aymant communique sa vertu au fer qui l'aproche [sic], et ce fer à l'autre fer qui le touche ensuite; de mesme dans les Poëmes dramatiques, les passions bien representées, ayant premierement atteint le Poëte, passent de luy à l'Acteur qui recite, et de l'acteur au peuple qui l'escoute[. . .][22]

This is how the theatre "conduit les hommes vers l'instruction, feignant de ne les mener qu'au divertissement," adds Scudéry. The illusion of truth must be created in this way so that the spectator's knowledge is finally rendered the more intense. The author has to bring the spectator to the very situation and sentiments that he himself underwent and felt at the moment of creation; he has to close the "psychical distance" and make him feel with the stage characters. It is as though the playwright were forcing the spectator to go through his own process of creation in reverse. This intensity of the spectator's feeling, the search for the total closing of this distance, is summed up by Rapin, when he remarks that "une passion imparfaite et avortée peut ébranler l'esprit de l'auditeur: et cela ne suffit pas, il faut l'enlever."[23] Thus they strove for the removal of all obstacles to the reduction of distance, but they realized full well that the removal of scenic and spectacular barriers did not suffice: language could become a more subtle one, and far more difficult to overcome.

B. Language and transparency

Given, then, that the aim of the theatre as seen by the classical theorists is instruction through pleasure by means both "subtiles" and "delicates,"[24] it is clear that maxims or aphorisms, all rhetorical turns of language should ultimately be banished from the theatre. Naturally, it was impossible that the theorists should have their way entirely: in a theatre whose dramatists were, for the most part, poets first and foremost, in an age when the more sophisticated segments of society were almost excessively conscious of language, there was bound to be an occasional "récit de Théramène" even in the most serious theatre.

Strictures on language, perhaps for this reason, did not come until somewhat later than the other classical demands we have seen. La Mesnardière, it is true, has a chapter devoted to problems of language in which, with many examples, he makes a case for a more austere use of it;[25] but in the main, as far as critics of the theatre are concerned at least, it is not until the 1670's with Saint-Evremond and Rapid in particular, that rules are actually prescribed. The first of these two, referring specifically to the pre-classical theatre, complains that the dramatists pay insufficient attention to demands of the scene and to the need for realism so that the spectator may identify. For, he says, if a lament goes on too long (d'Aubignac has given us an example of this also in Pyrame et Thisbé [see above, p. 15]), for example, particularly if it is too stylish, the spectator can no longer "become" the character, nor can he identify with the action.

> Quelquefois l'esprit du spectateur qui poussoit d'abord son imagination jusqu'à la personne qu'on represente, revient à soi-meme, desabusé qu'il est, et ne connoit plus que le poëte, qui, dans une espèce d'élégie, nous veut faire pleurer de la douleur qu'il a feinte, ou qu'il s'est formée.[26]

This passage is particularly interesting because it shows a perfect understanding of Bullough's "psychical distance" and reveals quite clearly that the classical theorists wanted to keep it as unobstrusive as possible; that they wished to prevent its fluctuation. Saint-Everemond is demanding: for him, the artist must withdraw completely to allow the spectator to identify with the character; anything less will strike this spectator as ridiculous:

> Un homme se mécompte de moi, en ces occasions; il tombe dans le ridicule, quand il prétend me donner de la pitié. Je trouve plus ridicule encore qu'on fasse l'éloquent, à se plaindre de ses malheurs. Celui qui prend la peine d'en discourir, m'épargne celle de l'en consoler. C'est la nature qui souffre, c'est à elle de se plaindre: elle cherche quelquefois à dire ce qu'elle sent, pour se soulager; non pas à le dire éloquemment, pour se complaire.
>
> Je suis aussi peu persuadé de la violence d'une passion qui est ingénieuse à s'exprimer par la diversité des pensées. Une âme touchée sensiblement ne laisse pas à l'esprit le liberté de penser beaucoup, et moins encore de se divertir dans la variété de ses conceptions.[27]

The "transparency" of language in the classical theatre is actually as illusory as the world represented on the stage, for within it, and by it, is created that whole world. Unlike the theatre of the previous generation, the spectacular side of the theatrical production was gradually reduced until, with Racine most evidently, the complete lack of all but the most general of scenic indications meant that language had to translate into a mental image for the spectator what was lacking in physical presence on the stage.

Language is transparent in a sense different from that used by Starobinski talking of Rousseau's frustrations, where ideally language should allow the feelings of the other to be seen more easily, for here, in this theatre, language is forced to use the fact that it is an obstacle (in a sense) to complete understanding: it no longer tries to act as a bridge to certain actions or to a sense that lies behind it, but rather produces, at its own level, a sense, a series of images, of sentiments and ideas, which go to make up the whole play. Language, in the fullest sense, means what it says.

Since there is no action going on outside the language, the amassing of tropes would reduce the play to nothing; for the spectator would be presented with no single action. Everything would have as many meanings as the poet cared to give it, and since the spectator has no plot outside the language which he might follow, there would no longer be a play: not, at least, in the sense they sought it. This multiple level used in the theatre is precisely what Boileau is complaining of in *l'Art poétique*, when, speaking of the old pastoral, he comments:

> On vit tous les bergers, dans leurs plaintes nouvelles,
> Fideles à la pointe, encor plus qu'à leurs belles;
> Chaque mot eut toujours deux visages divers[. . .]
> (11.350-352)

The "baroque" theatre, on the contrary, seems to use language quite otherwise. With ample movement, colour and spectacle, language becomes a counterpoint to the action. What is carried over the footlights in terms of language may well be something other than what is implied by the action and setting. Since there is spectacle, a set in which action may take place, there is a constant which the spectator may recognize, and around which language may weave all kinds of patterns. Here ambiguity may be rampant, in the classical theatre clarity must come first.

Where the classical audience receives a single impression, virtually being forced to take up a certain attitude, the pre-classical audience is divided between the visual and the aural, he receives two (or more) impressions at once and is thus unable to identify in the same way as his successor with a character. Under these circumstances, the pre-classical author may present a spectacle in opposition to the language. There may often be a separation of theme and action not found in the classical theatre.

Both create an unreal world (as by definition any theatre must), seen by the spectator as either real or illusory. The difference is not so much between two theatrical worlds, but lies rather in that the world created by the theatre of the second half of the century is one of themes. By this I mean that the theatrical world exists only by virtue of certain themes translated into action through language, themes which exist only through the language which translates them.[28] Language, action, themes cannot be played off against one another simply because the first is the medium for the other two.

The world of the theatre of the first half of the century does not exist by virtue of the same premises. The action does not necessarily coincide with the themes the dramatist is treating, the movements of language are not necessarily due to the exigencies of either the action or the themes. The set seems often to have been a deliberate obstacle set against the spectator's entry into the stage world. Yet to condemn this theatre, as has been done for so many years, is tc admit rather a parti pris for the classical theatre and its descendants than a judicious perspective on the theatre. This earlier creation seems to be admirably suited to the Weltanschauung of the "baroque" (or "mannerist?") artists.

In one sense at least it is not so far from the theatre of the middle ages (I am thinking particularly of the mysteries, although we shall see later that its manner has certain similarities with the lower levels of theatre). It not rarely tries to encompass considerably more than the significance of one man's actions, not by analogously raising them to a higher plane, as the classical theatre does, but by weaving them into a multiplicity of patterns. Their special theme seems to be, in fact, the problem of the nature of reality: hence the madness, the magic events, the disguises, the misunderstandings, the rapidly changing scenes, and so on. One man's character, under these conditions, is a part of the situation and is only important insofar as it helps to reveal this situation. The later theatre, on the contrary, will use character as the starting point of the action, it will be responsible for any peripeteia, as well as for the final outcome.

Naturally, I do not mean to imply that the classical theatre does not have illusion as a theme, only that its treatment starts there at a psychological level: to be raised to the metaphysical only if the spectator happens to be of such a turn of wit. Even in its comedies the classical theatre is quite serious: it may mock character, but only very rarely will it laugh at itself. Self-mockery, on the other hand, is the very marrow of the pre-classical stage. It treats the problem of illusion and all its implications as a game, whatever seriousness lies behind it; and these implications are certainly consciously envisioned. This is probably the reason why, during the 1630's, so many plays appeared whose main concern is with the nature of the theatre itself. This phenomenon is the subject of a special chapter.

The difference between the two theatres may be briefly indicated here by a comparison between Rotrou's *Saint-Genest*, *Venceslas* and *Cosroès*. The last two start with a character and deal with themes, on the surface, at least, eminently material and social, whose plot, far from being an illustration or an opposition, exists only because of the theme: each taking an opposition between power, love and duty in a clearly understandable situation. *Saint-Genest* starts from a situation, and sets out to confuse the spectator just as it confuses the characters themselves. Its theme, if relatively clear, is much broader and tries to reveal more about "man in the universe" than about man in a social situation. *Saint-Genest* has, however, lost the gaiety of the game, which is perhaps why, at the same time as being the masterpiece of the "baroque" theatre, it is unique. Whatever the reason, no other play of so broad a theme with such continuous gravity and without a character with whom to identify, came to join it. Perhaps *Athalie* is nearest to it, but the differences are greater than the similarities.

How far the classical theorists moved from this concept of theatre, and how successful they were is made clear by Bossuet's objections to the stage on the grounds, not of immorality (always a fine excuse for church condemnations), but that the spectator is made to feel spurious emotions, which, whether sinful or not by their nature, are sinful because false. In one of his sermons, speaking of the frame of mind the listener should be in for a sermon, he complains, after Saint Jean Chrysostome, that people often listen to sermons as though to a play:

> Comme je rencontrois souvent ce reproche dans ses divins prédications, j'ai voulu rechercher attentivement quel pouvoit être le fond de cette pensée, et voici ce qu'il m'a semblé: c'est qu'il y a des spectacles qui n'ont pour objet que le divertissement de l'esprit, mais qui n'excitent pas les affections, qui ne remuent pas les ressorts du coeur. Mais il n'en est pas de la sorte de ces représentations animées qu'on donne sur les théatres, dangéreuses en ce point, qu'elles ne plaisent point si elles n'émeuvent, si elles n'intéressent le spectateur, si elles ne lui font jouer aussi son personnage, sans être de l'action et sans monter sur le théâtre. C'est en quoi ces spectacles sont à craindre, parce que le coeur apprend insensiblement à se remuer de bonne foi. Il est donc ému, il est transporté, il se réjouit, il s'afflige de choses qui au fond sont indifférentes. Mais une marque certaine que ces mouvemens ne tiennent pas au coeur, c'est qu'ils s'évanouissent en changeant de lieu. Cette pitié qui causoit des larmes, cette colère qui enflammoit et les yeux et le visage, n'étoient que des images et des simulacres par lesquels le coeur se donne la comédie en lui-même, qui produisoient toutefois les memes effets que les passions véritables; tant il est aisé de nous imposer, tant nous aimons à nous jouer nous-mêmes.[29]
>
> (my underline)

Elsewhere he complains that because of the presence of the actor on the stage, these passions touch us all the more. They become "de vrais mouvemens, qui mettent en feu tout le parterre et toutes les loges . . ."

the mind and spirit, he says, are laid open to "d'imperceptibles insinuations."[30] When he speaks of the sinful nature of these emotions themselves, their falsity supposedly put aside, he returns continually to the same reasoning, as of Le Cid:

> Dites-moi, que veut un Corneille dans son Cid, sinon qu'on aime Chimène, qu'on l'adore avec Rodrigue, qu'on tremble avec lui lorsqu'il est dans la crainte de la perdre, et qu'avec lui on s'estime heureux lorsqu'il espère de la posséder? Si l'acteur ne sait pas intéresser le spectateur, l'émouvoir, le transporter de la passion qu'il a voulu exprimer, ou tombe-t-il, si ce n'est dans le froid, dans l'ennuyeux, dans l'insupportable, si on peut parler de cette sorte?[31]

Thus, for Bossuet, the problem (from a religious point of view) is not simply that what is presented on stage, or that the whole outlook of the acting profession is sinful: it is that the spectator is made to feel emotions and to share actions that are possibly sinful but certainly false. He is complaining of the very thing for which the classical theorists were striving throughout the second two-thirds of the century.

If it is possible to build up one type of reaction between the play and the spectator in this way, does this imply that no other is possible? One could hardly say so; and yet this is precisely what theoreticians of "aesthetic distance" and critics of the French classical theatre have tried to do. We have already suggested some characteristics of the pre-classical theatre: a different concept of the theatrical relationship may well be evidence of a difference in general outlook:

> C'est peu de dire qu'une certaine manière de voir, de contempler, d'estimer temps et espace, est impliquée par les règles dramaturgiques et les impositions du jeu et de son instrument. C'est la nature meme de l'échange entre acteur et spectateur qui est en cause, un type de participation.[32]

We have just described a type of theatre which attempts to place the spectator "dans l'acte même"[33] by removing the barrier to his "identifying" from before him, thus enabling him to come into more direct contact with the stage characters. This essentially is the significance of Jouvet's tale about Auguste Renoir, who, as a child, was upset by the use of a real piano as a stage prop, for, says Jouvet, this sets up two different types of illusion in opposition to one another, destroying the effect of either. This is why the "palais à volonté" became the habitual scenic instruction of the classical theatre. If all the barriers whose removal became the chief concern of the classical theorists are left; if the spectator is obliged to pursue a character across many countries, to watch him gain several years in the course of a play, to follow him and others through multiple criss-crossing personal relationships, to accept the most fantastic of situations and events -- whether supernatural or terrestrial -- if, in addition to this, he is expected, at the level of language, to comprehend many meanings and infinite slight nuances carried over in the most varied of tones (to a point where a given situation may become, no longer a live situation in terms of the stage action, but an essentially literary exercise not uncommonly in contradiction with the very action it purports to second), then this spectator will find it impossible to enter the action in the same way as the classical spectator could.

It is this very variety which makes it possible for communication of quite a different kind to occur. Unable to communicate empathically with a character, or with an action, the spectator becomes a part of a theatrical situation somewhat in the sense meant by Sartre in his already-mentioned article.[34] For while the fluctuating tone, the spectacle, scenic effects and so on will reduce the characters as often as not to so many puppets, with whom identification is not possible, yet these "barriers" are part and parcel of another type of theatre. They can be used to set up different levels of illusion by which the playwright causes a fluctuating "psychical distance," or, if we like, a "theatrical distancing." The spectator, being urged into comprehension at one level, is abruptly faced with a situation properly belonging at a different level and is obliged to abandon the assumptions and anticipations at which he has comfortably arrived.

In such a theatre we would expect to find the problem of illusion and reality a principal theme (and perhaps the very reason for its existence in the first place), to a degree where the play itself finally becomes its own theme. Here the spectator's empathy with a character for a moral purpose is of no interest to the playwright; he is more concerned with placing him in a situation which is more metaphysical than social, although it will obviously have overtones applicable to this last and will not rarely throw doubt on social mores.

This wish to express the human condition on stage rather than simply a small part of it from which moral instruction may be drawn, is expressed by Ogier in his preface to Schélandre's Tyr et Sidon (1628):

> [. . .] car de dire qui est mal seant [sic] de faire paroistre en une mesme pièce les mesmes personnes, traitant tantost d'affaires serieuses, importantes et tragiques, et incontinent après de choses communes, vaines et comiques, c'est ignorer la condition de la vie des hommes, de qui les jours et les heures sont bien souvent entrecoupés de ris et de larmes, de contentement et d'affliction, selon qu'ils sont agitez de la bonne ou de la mauvaise fortune.[35]

This is a theatre which includes the spectator in the way sought by Baty and Jouvet among others:

> Il s'agit pour lui [le metteur en scène] de réaliser sur la scène le songe d'un univers expresif et cohérent et de provoquer dans la salle une hallucination collective.

So says Baty, while Jouvet, speaking specifically of the situation brought about by the presence of spectators on the stage (which he dates from the middle ages), makes an illuminating comment on the nature of theatrical verisimilitude, and one of particular significance in the present context:

> Dans cette intimité et cette familiarité du spectateur, la convention théatrale m'apparait plus pure et le sens de la cérémonie plus impérieux. Le rapprochement du spectateur et des acteurs, cette proximité des artifices du spectacle obligent l'esprit à les vérifier et à trouver leur signification.
>
> Les règles de ce noble jeu qui est le théatre, me semblent plus *strictes sur cette scène* qui tient encore de l'estrade et où la véritable illusion, celle que créent l'auteur et les spectateurs, se moque de la fausse illusion de la vraisemblance.[36]

One is almost tempted to say that for such a theatre the principal theme will *always* be the conflict of illusion and reality; there will certainly tend to be a preoccupation with subjects on which a permanent judgment is impossible, either because they deny social morality, or because they cannot be judged in accordance with that morality: hence, perhaps, the often amoral nature of this type of theatre.

This, it would seem, is the type of theatre practised by the "baroque" dramatists, and it would explain why the emphasis in critical work went from satisfaction of the eyes and ears towards a plea for upsetting the emotions. The spectator of a classical play must leave the playhouse reflecting on the unease of his emotions, his predecessor should be contemplating a kind of allegorical revelation of the human condition. The comment of the first must be closely bound with social mores, that of the other must be free to show the context of those mores. In a sense, the later theatre will seek to demonstrate the perils of deviation from a set social code, while the other will reflect an era when a definite code of morality had yet to be formed and will be the mirror of its uncertainty.

The essence of the "baroque" theatre cannot be in the classical type of psychological movements, but is in its varied spectacle:

> La poesie, et particulierement celle qui est composée pour le théatre, n'est faite que pour le plaisir et le divertissement, et ce plaisir ne peut proceder que de la varieté des evenements qui s'y representent[. . .]

Thus Ogier, once again, praises this variety not simply because it contents the spectator, but because it is a reflection of life.[37]

Whether the playwrights were simply making use of a situation into which they were forced is immaterial here, since we wish rather to describe this theatre, rather than ascribe causes to its development, although we are able to make some fairly firm suggestions. Naturally, too, the two types of theatre described above cannot be as clearly separated as the above sketch would seem to indicate, and the greatest of "baroque" plays is probably Rotrou's Saint-Genest, which did not appear until 1645. Similarly, the first classical plays -- in tone, at least -- appeared in the early 1630's. Nor did the generation of 1630 produce its theatre in a void: the early plays of Mairet, the theatre of Hardy, translations of the Italian pastorals, had already aroused in the public certain exigencies, which the theatre of the 1630's answered.

NOTES

[1] Henri Gouhier, *L'essence du théatre* . . . (Paris: Plon, 1943), 15.

[2] See René Bray, *op. cit.*, 22.

[3] Bray, *op. cit.*, 191.

[4] See Jan Doat, *Entrée du public*. *La psychologie collective et le théâtre*. Préf. de Charles Dullin. (Paris: Flore, 1947), 69-92.

[5] Bray, *op. cit.*, 191-214.

[6] Aristotle, *Poetics*, Ch. IX.

[7] Mairet, préface to *Sylvanire*, éd. Richard Otto (Bamberg: Buchner, 1890).

[8] Rapin, *Reflexions sur la poetique d'Aristote, et sur les Ouvrages des Poetes anciens et modernes* (Paris: Francois Muguet, 1674), 19.

[9] *Ibid.*, 173-174.

[10] Jules de La Mesnardière, *La poëtique* . . . (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, 1640), 74. See also l'abbé d'Aubignac, *La pratique du théâtre*, éd. Pierre Martino (Alger: Carbonel; Paris: Champion, 1927), 314-315.

[11] In *Discours de la Tragédie* preceding *Brutus*, *Oeuvres complètes* (Genève: Cramer, 1775), II, 266.

[12] See d'Aubignac, *op. cit.*, 123:

> Il seroit meme à souhaitter que l'action du Poëme ne demandast pas plus de temps dans la verité que celuy qui se consume dans la représentation . . .

See also La Mesnardière, *op. cit.*, 48; Corneille, *IIIe*, *Discours* and the *Examen* of *La Veuve*. As Villiers explains it in his article, "Illusion dramatique et dramaturgie classique," *XVIIe*. *Siècle*, LXXIII (1966), 21:

> . . . on ne vit vraiment dans le présent avec 'l'autre' que dans la même durée; ainsi, pour revivre pleinement un épisode du passé, cherche-t-on autant que possible à recréer l'évocation dans les mêmes conditions de durée.

[13] Corneille, preface to *Don Sanche*; La Mesnardière, *op. cit.*, N.

[14] See, for example, André Villiers, *op. cit.*, 9, on physical perspective:

> La science impose une nouvelle manière de voir. Satisfait de la justification des lois de l'apparence par la représentation géométrique de l'espace selon les lois optiques, on exige plus encore: la soumission des données parfois trompeuses des sens aux rectificatifs de la raison.

[15] See Bibliography (Part 2, a).), for writings of theatrical men.

[16] In his article, "'Psychical distance' as a Factor in Art and an Esthetic Principal," *British Journal of Psychology*, V (1913), 87-118.

[17] Gouhier, *op. cit.*, 163.

[18] See "Contemporary Theatre and Aesthetic Distance," *PMLA*, LXXVI, 3 (June 1961), 277.

[19] Stendhal, *Racine et Shakespeare*, Ch. I, in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Pierre Larrive, 1951-1954), XVI, 15. See also P.A. Michelis, "Aesthetic Distance and the Charm of Contemporary Art," *JAAC*, XXVIII, I (Sept. 1959), 3.

[20] d'Aubignac, *op. cit.*, 333-334.

[21] In *Témoignages sur le théatre* (Paris: Flammarion, 1952), 157-162.

[22] Georges de Scudéry, *L'apologie du Théatre* (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1639), 6-7; in Robert Mantero, éd., *Corneille critique et son temps* . . . (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1964), 82.

[23] Rapin, *op. cit.*, 99.

[24] Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac, "Responce a deux questions. Ou du Caractere et de l'instruction de la comedie," in *Oeuvres diverses du sieur de Balzac* (Paris: Toussaint Quinet, 1664), 86.

[25] *La poëtique*, Ch. X, "Le langage. Quatrieme partie de la tragedie," 325-409.

[26] "Sur le caractere des tragedies" (1672), in *Oeuvres melées*, éd. Charles Giraud (Paris: Techener, 1865), I, 338.

[27] *Ibid.*, See also Rapin, 181.

[28] See La Mesnardière, 12-13.

[29] "Sermon pour le IIe dimanche de Carême," in *Oeuvres complètes*, éd. P. Lachat (Paris: Louis Vivès, 1862-1866), IX, 129.

[30] "Maximes et réflexions sur la comédie," _O.C._, XXVII, 25, 40.

[31] Lettre de Bossuet au P. Caffaro, Théatin. A Germigni, ce 9 mai, 1694, _O.C._, XXVII, 4; see also "Maximes et réflexions," 23.

[32] Villiers, _op_. _cit_., 4.

[33] Doat, _op_. _cit_., 59.

[34] Sartre, "Forgers of Myths . . ."

[35] In _Ancien théatre français_, éd. Viollet-le-Duc (Paris: Jannet, 1856), VIII, 20.

[36] Gaston Baty, _Rideau baissé_ (Paris: Bordas, 1949), 219; Louis Jouvet, _Réflexions du comédien_ (Paris: Librairie Théatrale, 1952), 147.

[37] _Ancien théatre français_, VIII, 13.

II. ALEXANDRE HARDY: THE SPECTATOR AND THE THEATRE OF DESTINY

> Captif du labyrinthe aux inconus détours,
> Où l'infernale nuit se rencontre toujours,
> Où l'implacable faim d'vne horreur de nature,
> Dans son ventre deuoit faire sa sépulture,
> Où rien ne paroissoit qu'vne image de mort,
> Où le courage estoit inutile, & l'effort [. . .]
> (Ariadne, 11.11-16)

It is important to judge Hardy by some measure other than that of the classical theatre which followed him a generation or two later. For to take his measure in the light of standards unfamiliar to him and to which he by no means aspired is to make him fall short of those standards without showing, however, what is basic to his own theatre, merely to what extent he is a precursor of a theatre to come. Thus Rigal, suggesting that Hardy disliked the solution of simply filling his plays with complications of one kind or another, and incapable of creating "la tragédie psychologique," of conceiving "l'intérêt de la lutte des passions," concluded that the playwright was left with

> un système mixte et mal défini, où une action plus animée, un commencement d'intrigue, quelque étude des caractères et des passions vinssent renforcer ceux des éléments traditionnels de la tragédie qui se pouvaient maintenir encore.[1]

Much of this is undoubtedly true, but when Rigal comments that if Hardy had attempted to inaugurate the psychological tragedy, "un public ignorant et grossier se fut mal prêté à l'innovation," he appears nearer to a more fruitful examination of Hardy's theatre, which might then enable a comparison with the classical theatre in terms other than those of subordination. For if the audience could not be held in the kind of relationship necessitated by a "psychological theatre," what other kind of rapport would hold it? To know this it is of no use to begin by studying the plays in the light of a theatre which came into being a generation later.

If one has the feeling that the action is more animated than in Garnier or Montchrestien, in Jodelle or Du Baïf (but not than in Jean de la Taille or the popular theatre), at least in the tragedies this does not normally come from more physical movement on stage, but rather from a change in the use of language. Garnier seems to create a language which is then divided among a certain number of characters, as does also Montchrestien. Hardy appears to create a language which projects characters, who come alive and struggle to escape the web of the language in which they are caught. The language becomes the echo of their destiny and the symbol of the life they must see through to the end. His characters struggle, not internally, not even simply against one another, but against the fatality of their character, against fatality itself made almost tangible in an oppressive atmosphere created by the language and which weighs alike on character and spectator. Within such a frame, the "commencement d'intrigue" to which Rigal refers, like the "quelque étude des caractères et des passions," can clearly be no more than a "beginning" and a "slight study," for they may only extend to the bounds laid down by this fatality, and to those permitted by the language which creates this fatality, whose presence is confirmed by their very limitations.

In our discussion of the three or four plays of Hardy to follow it must be borne in mind that Hardy's audience could not be satisfied by the dry revelation of the condition of humanity, in whatever way this audience is included; it must lie over something more basically interesting and entertaining: things had to happen, there had to be movement to some degree, he had to "contenter les yeux." It is equally apparent that in any theatre the nature of the rapport is never altogether constant. The point is not, of course, whether or not a given spectator upsets our reasoning by not reacting at all or by remaining unaware of the atmosphere just mentioned; it is to attempt to discover what was, or seems to have been, the principal relationship between the stage and the spectator.

A. Didon se sacrifiant: liturgy and the spectator; problems of performance

Didon opens with a long speech delivered by Aenée which, more than anything else, serves to set the atmosphere of the play. This atmosphere reflects Hardy's concern to achieve a feeling of fatality, of divine power, a feeling peculiar to the Greek and Roman theatres as well as to the mystery plays: man as subject to the divine power. The speech takes the form of a prayer:

> Grands Dieux, qui disposez des Empires du monde,
> Toy qui portes en main ce tonnerre qui gronde [. . .]
> (11.1-2)

And the rhetoric of the entire discourse is conceived as a prayer. Yet at the same time it is a prophecy; it becomes apparent to the spectator that the ultimate end of the Trojans' voyage is the founding of Rome, and that Aenée regards this end as inevitable:

> Mais d'ailleurs le destin de prudence infinie
> Traisne ce beau dessein iusqu'au bord d'Ausonie,

> Là se doit restaurer le mur Dardanien,
> Là s'appaiser le soeur du grand Saturnien,
> Là, le Tybre coulant d'vne douce entresuite,
> Arrester des Troyens la vagabonde fuite,
> Là mon espoir Ascaigne, Ascaigne mon soucy,
> Redoutable, regner sous vn ciel adoucy,
> Laissant de race en race, vne splendeur d'Empire
> Sur tout où le Soleil fait ses flammes reluire.
> (ll.41-50)

The spectator is not given an introduction to the play simply in terms of historical background and knowledge of present circumstance, he is being set in a mood. Character, as conceived by Racine, or even Corneille, is here quite irrelevant, for man is to be shown in relation to the universe, and as controlled by that universe. The atmosphere of the play will place the spectator in an analogous situation to that of Aenée. This is made clear in the next few lines: his reactions as a personality occur only within the framework set by the will of the gods, whose past actions he already knows and of whose future intentions he has been made aware by oracle:

> Entre l'obscurité de ce Dédale ombreux:
> Entre le souuenir de nos maux encombreux,
> Et la comparaison de la presente joye
> Mon esprit agité s'esgare, se fourvoye [. . .] (ll. 51-54)

He complains to the gods of this uncertainty, for he knows the joyful present cannot continue, since they do not so wish; yet he remains in ignorance of what will precede the conclusion of the voyage. He knows the goal and that its achievement is the desire of the gods, but what will come before is concealed from him. Such a situation explains his response to Achate when the latter asks why he appears so anxious:

> La crainte du futur, du futur, que les Dieux,
> Sous l'ombre d'vn repos dérobent à nos yeux. (ll. 71-72)

Aenée, thus placed in a situation not dissimilar to that of the Senecan hero, is oppressed by the will of the gods, against whom he is powerless to do much more than bear the pain, despite all his struggles. The "volonté" of which Palinure speaks (l. 82) is in fact not theirs, but that of the gods; it is on these grounds that he criticizes Aenée for succumbing to his love for Didon:

> [. . .] un fils de Deesse, vn heros indompté,
> Vn, qui sçait des destins le sacre volonté,
> Vn, qui doit rebastir dans le sein de l'Itale
> Notre seconde Troye, à la premiere égale,
> Qui tiens notre salut enchaisné dans le sien,
> Cedant aux passions, d'excusable n'a rien [. . .] (ll. 107-112)

Achate, however, goes further and suggests that even this passion which might seem an exercise of Aenée's will, actually served to save them all, and Jupiter will pardon an infidelity to Didon insofar as it was perpetrated in accordance with his will. Their present situation is thus presented as no more than another stage of their voyage, in which everything is planned beforehand by the divinity. None of their actions is actually the result of their own free will.

From the examples already quoted it becomes apparent that the language of Hardy has about it a liturgical cast which often rises to a level of considerable exaltation. As already suggested, it is through this language that the atmosphere overylaying the theatre is created. The actions of the characters in their entirety must at all times underlie this atmosphere. The spectator has to be made to feel the weight of fatality upon him at the same time as he watches the vain struggles of the characters. With character subordinated to the rhetorical expression of the situation of man, there is nothing with which the spectator may continuously identify, so that he will not find himself emotionally in the position of those on stage, but rather watching them as though from a distance but feeling the same fatality as they. To achieve this it is necessary that the playwright avoid changing the atmosphere through the action of a character: his plays cannot start in a mood of happiness and end in grief, or vice versa, for the mood of destiny does not change with the fortunes of man. So, with the exit of Aenée and his nobles to allow the entrance of Didon and Anne, these last must be made to continue it rather than shine as individuals: if Didon comes in happy in Aenée's love, the mood of the first scene will be broken and the audience will be placed in front of the response of a certain character to a given situation, instead of being imposed on by an atmosphere into which both character and situation must needs fit as the parts of a Chinese puzzle. As it is, the mood of the second scene is as sombre as that of the first, and with no delay to allow the audience any fluctuation in its reaction. As the nobles go out on Aenée's order to prepare the ships, the sisters enter on Anne's plea that Didon tell her what grief

> Vous semble repousser le bon-heur qui vous suit,
> Et de votre beau iour faire vne sombre nuit [. . .]
> (11. 151-152)

Since it is impossible that Didon knew of Aenée's decision, it is apparent that her grief cannot be caused by certain knowledge. What we do learn is that she is suffering from a feeling of guilt, believing that she is committing adultery against her dead husband, Sichée, who, she says, has recently appeared to her in a dream, warning her that she will be punished and that, in any case, Aenée is bound to leave her. Replying to Anne's objections, she adds that Aenée has spoken of Italy and of the "illustre renom" he must there win for himself (11. 198-200) in terms which only reinforce her dream. When her sister further suggests that Aenée's words serve only to fortify the spirit of his son, who must continue the journey when he grows up, Didon, doubting still, goes to consult Juno. This is of importance, for it shows further how concerned Hardy is to maintain this idea of human submission to the divine authority (the same feature, found throughout all his tragedies, is sufficient to demonstrate that this is not only due to the particular subject of this play). In view, however, of what has been said concerning mood, the scene has other significance. The cause of Didon's grief is not given immediately as suspicion of Aenée's imminent departure, but as guilt, introducing a situation to which she may react in the same way, maintaining the effect of atmosphere, without losing consequence by having Didon react to something of which she must still be ignorant. Not that Hardy always worries about this, but, since the spectator is watching the behaviour of men, the playwright usually tries to achieve a certain logic even if he does not always allow himself to be upset by coincidence. Hardy may now introduce the further suspicions of Aenée's departure with less obviousness. Her guilty conscience allows a useful bridge, hiding the coincidence while it maintains the mood. So, without obviously creating a specific theatrical atmosphere by simply suiting his characters' reactions to it regardless of logic, Hardy nonetheless spreads a mood over the theatre by revealing the reaction to a situation, likely enough, but subordinated in purpose to that mood.

It is necessary to mention the chorus. The first to make its appearance here is that of the Phoenician women (11. 231-283), and it is noteworthy that it takes the form, not of a comment on the play's action, but again of a prayer: to the effect that the gods allow Didon and Aenée to marry and live happily ever after (ll. 231-254; 267-284), with a brief break in which they advise one another to dress themselves suitably for the occasion.

The chorus seems to be intended to maintain the atmosphere of divine control and of the lack of human freedom (our actions being controlled by a will which sees them as part of a larger pattern, a pattern which to us remains simply a blind labyrinth), if not the same dolorous tone. Hardy can now allow the tone to fluctuate beneath the atmosphere already described. Once the grave nature of human activity has been laid forth, once the spectator has been placed in this atmosphere suggestive of the exalted pain of life within the divine pattern, Hardy allows the tone to be lightened -- deceptively, since the spectator is speedily returned to a ferocious tone with the scene that follows between the slighted Iarbe and his companion, Therodomante, as the former calls on Jupiter to avenge the crime committed by Didon, adding that he will do it himself if necessary as the fulfillment of the god's desire.

There is some question as to whether the choruses were actually performed. Rigal has said they were not,[2] following mainly a line of Troterel, who said that he had never seen a chorus performed in more than a thousand performances to which he had been witness. Hardy, in his Au lecteur preceding his works, made the comment that:

> Les Choeurs y sont obmis, comme superflue à la representation, & de trop de fatigue à refondre.[3]

If this is the case, one may argue, why did he write any in the first place? Certainly, as a poète à gages whose time and ink were valuable, it was probably not to give his fingers exercise. Why write any if they were neither to be seen nor published? The only conclusion one can come to is either that Valleran cut them out after Hardy had written them, or that their being considered "superflus" in 1624 has little to do with the desires of the original spectator. Actually, in view of what we have been saying, there are good reasons for their inclusion. If, as it appears, the major thing about this theatre is its atmosphere, here is an excellent way to sustain it. Their presence is by no means an imposition on the play, but seems to grow from the liturgical and fateful atmosphere created by Hardy. When the chorus takes the form of a prayer, it seems the duplication by the crowd of the prayers uttered by the heroes; when it takes the form of a comment on the condition of humanity, it echoes the spectator. There is here no sudden creation of distance, since the spectator is already removed from the action as such.

Yet there is a further consideration. Hardy's beginnings were in the provinces, and he returned there continually when Paris failed to offer a living or when the Confrères de la Passion decided to dislike him and the troupe he accompanied.[4] In the provinces the mystery type of performance continued regularly for years after Royal edict had put an end to it in Paris,[5] so that the audience would be quite familiar with the idea of the chorus. Besides, even the audience of the Hotel de Bourgogne itself, at least well into the century was still

> le petit peuple qui se pressait pour assister à la représentation des mystères sur le parvis des églises; c'est la foule turbulente qui entourait les trêteaux des théâtres en plein air [. . .][6]

It is still, adds Descotes,[7] that audience stirred by and included in the atmosphere of the mystery play -- a dramatic system which depends on an audience to help create its meaning. For there the grandeur of the relationship between God and Man which takes all time and the world as its arena can only be developed to the full in the presence of a moving audience which continues its everyday activity while the play is being performed, much as the spectators of a series of Nō plays will bring their meals and their games along. The theatre, it would seem, regarded from such an attitude, needs to find some way of reaching its audience which goes beyond simply watching and allowing itself to be imbued with the emotions of the characters: the spectator must be made to feel an atmosphere. Thus the apparently random nature of some of Hardy's plays -- particularly the pastorals and some of the tragi-comedies -- appears more the result of an instinctive feeling for the needs of his spectators than the outcome of a careless haste; the multiple actions, the movement, the enforced use of a multiple set, correspond very much to the babble that, by all reports, was virtually continuous in the audience. Given the fact that under the very conditions prevalent in the auditorium it would be impossible to gain the attention of the spectators sufficiently long or intensely enough to have them identify with a character as they might at the performance of a Racinian play, a different kind of theatre is called for: one precisely that makes use of its audience as a part of an atmosphere that must be created on the stage to overflow into the audience. One way to achieve this overflowing -- there may be many -- is to present a correspondence between stage movement and variety and that of the audience (possible, naturally, only where such an audience is involved; it would be difficult for an author to create such an audience in order to obtain this effect). This is why we should not take the words of Rayssiguier as a criticism (however he meant them) when he wrote:

> La plus grande part de ceux qui portent la teston à l'Hotel de Bourgogne veulent que l'on contente leurs yeux par la diuersité et le changement de la scène du théatre, et que le grand nombre des accidents et aventures extraordinaires leur otent la connaissance du sujet.[8]

This should appear rather as the observation of something which made possible, as it necessitated, a certain type of theatre. In most cases the plot, whether one actually loses sight of it or not, is subordinated to that movement criticized by Rayssiguier, and the real intention of the plays is to be found in that motion. Solemnity is given, not by the plots, but by the rhetoric which is imposed on the movement, and which creates the atmosphere into which the whole is cast.

There seems to be no overly strong reason either for or against the performance of the choruses, except in certain situations where a dialogue is in question (see below, p. 47). My own feeling would be that they were probably played at some times, but not at others.[9] They would, in any case, not break the mood of the theatre. Any argument attempting to explain the presence or absence of choruses on the basis of vraisemblance is here of complete irrelevance. At least one of the choruses of Didon, however, that of the Troyens (ll. 557-616), may allow us to get a closer view of the concerns of this theatre.

This chorus is a commentary at once on the play's action and on the wider significance of this action, as already revealed to some extent by Aenée's fear of the immediate future in spite of his knowledge of the divine will (l. 42); for man is doomed to be the prey of the "monstre carnaciere" (Meleagre, l. 98), of the minotaur within the labyrinth (Ariadne), until he dies, which conclusion is the only certainty in life:

> L'etrange changement des affaires mondaines
> Ne ressemble rien plus,
> Que les courses des mers qui décroissent soudaines,
> Puis croissent d'vn reflus.
> Or la prosperité chez cetuy-cy seiourne,
> Tantost l'autre à son tour,
> Au favorable vent que fortune luy tourne,
> Iouït de son seiour.
> 'L'homme n'a de certain parmy l'incertitude,
> Que l'horreur du tombeau
> Tout le reste suiet à la vicissitude,
> Est vne ampoule d'eau'. (ll. 557-568)

Typically, this cliché concerning the nature of man's life eventually becomes applied more narrowly to Aenée himself, before it is modified into another cliché going off in a different direction, as the chorus envies the lot of the common man:

> Hélas! combien au pris, combien est souhaitable
> Ceste condition; —
> Qui remenant au soir les boeufs dedans l'estable,
> Nuë d'ambition,
> Ne pense au lendemain qu'à refendre les plaines [. . .]
> (ll. 597-601)

to envy the lot of the men who

> Ains contens de leur peu, dans vne maisonnette
> Attendent que la mort
> Les prenne apres cent ans la conscience nette
> De rapine et de tort. (ll. 613-616)

We will see the lie given to this particular hope when we come to glance at Scedase, but it is of significance here as showing the particular concern of Hardy, a concern whose revelation is one of the objects of this theatrical system.

These choruses, like the Homeric similes and extended metaphors they tend to contain, are only possible in a theatre which does not seek character realism but a kind of stylization beneath the blanket of an atmosphere which connects the spectator with this ballet of words and movement, allowing him neither to identify with it, nor even necessarily to be convinced by it, but to follow it as a story and, even more, as a reflection of and a comment upon the nature of the human condition. Thus when Didon, for example, begins her lament of Act III, I, with just such a simile the spectator will be not at all surprised; rather is he perhaps expecting it:

> Anne c'est fait de moy, ce corsair effronté
> Enleve impunément mon honneur affronté,
> Ses mats sont couronnez, sa brigande cohorte,
> Nos viures dans les naux amasse de la sorte,
> Qu'vn troupeau picoreur de fourmis épandus,
> Aussi tost qu'en Iuillet les épics sont tondus:
> Il comble preuoyant, la froideur voisine,
> De quelque chesne vsé la profonde racine,
> Les chemins en sont noirs, & au labeur ardent,
> Il ne va qu'au trépas le butin démordant [. . .]
> (11. 617-626)

This kind of semi-oracular discourse has the same effect as the frequent calls upon the divine authority and maintain the same solemn yet tense mood which forms the unity of the play. Yet, despite the solemnity, or perhaps because of it, because it allows him to create a fury of language permissible only because of the quasi-religious tone, Hardy is able to create moments of terrible realism: so with the at first furious, then piteous, plea of Didon as she tries to retain Aenée's departure, which is so effective because allusions are permitted which in a later (and more "realistic") theatre are forbidden, where they would, in any case, appear as quite outrageous. It seems to elevate Didon far above a simple type, for she is made so eminently real as the wronged and unfortunate woman. Her plea, with all its contradictions, accusing, sorrowing, conciliatory, begging, the whole seemingly overlaid with a pride which throws the blame onto Aenée, accepting her fault, but insisting that he repair it, until finally she prays to him, forgetting her pride in her submission if he will only stay; this plea must surely move the spectator with her emotions, despite the grandiose nature of the rhetoric which formulates it. Yet the distance is not allowed to remain closed, and in contrast to her transports Aenée continues to appear but the pale, cold instrument of the gods that he is. As the interest returns to him, so the spectator once again assumes his original distance:

> N'accuse que le Ciel, ie ne suis plus à moy,
> Pressé du partement par sa seuere loy! (ll. 785-786)

So Aenée shrugs off her prayer with an excuse the spectator already knows to be true, for throughout her tirade we have known the inevitable answer: it is impossible that he remain. We are also aware that his character may not show through in any excess of sorrow which realism might demand; he cannot stay, but neither may Didon accept his explanations, for such is the order of things. There is here perhaps already a measure of that dispute between reason and the emotions later to become part of the character of an era, but here it is exteriorized as an argument between two people; later it will occur within the mind of a single character when the spectator will be forced to identify with him. Here the spectator's attitude is dictated by his knowledge of the divine inevitability weighing upon the situation, knowledge which is translated into feeling.

Hardy never allows the atmosphere to be dispelled. Once he has created it, the same grandiose, liturgical tone continues. Didon's lament goes on like some biblical cry in the wilderness:

Cherches-tu du repos, misérable insensée,
L'ame de tant de soins ça, & là balancée?
Incertaine de viure encores vn moment,
Ores que l'infidelle est sur son partement,
Ores que le barbare, aprè l'Adieu funeste,
Te fuit, ne plus ne moins, qu'vne effroyable peste,
Ores que retiré dans le creux d'vn vaisseau,
Possible il n'attendra le iour à fendre l'eau.
   Anne, où és-tu ma soeur? aproche ma chere âme,
Si tu veux renoüer le long fil de ma trâme,
Va trouuer le Troyen, va, non point à demy,
Coniurer la pitié de mon traitre ennemy [. . .]
(ll. 939-949)

to conclude with a prayer to Junon, and a foreboding of the future:

Las! vne triste horreur me presage, me dit,
Que ie ne fléchiray ce corsair maudit:
Qu'Anne perdra ses pas, & ses prières vaines,
Deia l'affreuse mort chemine par mes veines. (ll. 1013-1016)

From this point on, the part of the gods, of omens and visions, becomes the principal base of the action. Immediately after Didon's prayer, the Trojan chorus is seen in a prayer to Neptune that he help their voyage, and there soon follows the only physical divine intervention in the play (although it is intended as a dream, since Aenée is pictured as sleeping and wakes on the god Mercury's departure). The winged messenger appears to tell Aenée to fly before Didon can reach him in her "rage iniurieuse" (1080). They decide to leave, and to Anne's attempts to sway Aenée one last time, reply only that it is the will of the gods. The spectator is then returned to Didon as Anne goes back to her to tell her what has happened, and Didon relates to us an evil omen to which she has just been subjected: making her annual sacrifice to the spirit of her husband, she has been spattered with blood, the sacred wine was likewise turned to blood and became black. This is a sign to her to instruct her subjects to follow Aenée to the port and destroy him and his fleet. At this point Anne, following her sister's imprecations against herself and Aenée, appears to make a semi-aside:

Comme vn flot se grossit de l'autre qui le suit,
Touiours de mal en pis sa plainte elle poursuit,
En imprecations aiguise sa colere,
Il vaut mieux l'interrompre, à peine de déplaire;
Toutefois ce venin rentré dedans le coeur,
La pourroit suffoquer à l'acces du rancoeur,
Plus discrette, attendons qu'elle vomisse à l'aise,
Qu'vn nuage de pleurs cette tourmente appaise.
(11. 1381-1388)

Seemingly said half to herself and half to the audience, this kind of aside has the same effect as the commentary of a chorus. Since there is no character with whom the spectator can identify, this simply supports the distance that already exists between the stage character and the audience. This kind of device is relatively common, and seems to support the impression we have of the liturgical atmosphere.

The final scene, in which occurs the death of Didon, is formulated by Hardy as a kind of litany between the chorus and Didon, then between the chorus and Barce, as in the following extract:

Barce: Au meurtre, elle se tuë,
Choevr: ô prodige effroyable!
Courons, pour retenir sa dextre impitoyable.
Barce: Helas! il n'est plus tems, ce beau sein trauersé,
L'ame fuit dans le sang à gros boüillons versé.
Choevr: O ville desolée!
Barce: ô chetiue vieillesse!
Choevr: He! d'où vient que sa soeur, à son besoin la laisse?
Barce: La cruelle luy a expres commis le soin
De sacrifice, afin de la tenir plus loin.
Choevr: O rage furieuse! ô maudite iournée!
Barce: O celeste rancune, à nous nuire ostinée! (11. 1851-1860)

Finally, we are returned to a kind of slow litany in which Anne, Barce, and the chorus pick up the themes already mentioned to bewail the plight of humanity, while the play terminates on the semi-ironic epilogue of Iarbe's messenger who has finally arrived (from Act II, I.), and who laments that had she married Iarbe this catastrophe would not have occurred, seeming thus to pick up at the end the notion of the fatal ruling of man by the divine powers.

The tone of this play is quite different from the earlier Didon of Jodelle (c. 1560), which will not here be treated at any length as it really falls outside the scope of the present study. A number of brief comments will perhaps suffice to show its similarities and its important differences. The outlook of the characters is not dissimilar to those of Hardy, save in one important manner; as Ascagne puts it to his companions:

> En memoire me tõbe
> Ce qu'vn iour nous disoit mon pere sur la tombe
> D'Anchise mon ayeul: Que l'amour & la haine
> Des Dieux vont bigarrant la fresle vie humaine:
> Tant qu'à peine vne ioye aux mortels se rapporte,
> Qui n'ait pour sa compagne vne douleur plus forte:
> Mais il conseille aussi qu'aux choses couloureuses
> On s'aueugle, pour voir & gouster les heureuses
> (ll. 75-82)

In these last two lines seems to lie the key to the difference: the characters do not struggle, they lament and accept. They ignore the barrier of fatality, with which Hardy joins his stage and his spectator. Thus the oppressive and exalting atmosphere we have tried to show in the later Didon is lacking. Jodelle's characters do not even have the illusion of being free: their knowledge is identical to that of the spectator. There is, however, a more important difference. As far as is known, this theatre was acted only before scholarly audiences, whose relationship with the stage must certainly have been much calmer than that of Hardy's audience. There can be no question of an overall correspondence of the kind possible for Hardy in an audience who were perhaps judging more than submitting. The aesthetic relationship must needs have been of a very different kind. Hardy's atmosphere, within which are both the stage characters struggling against it in semi-ignorance and the spectator, feeling it and able to watch the characters with a certain irony, is quite alien to this theatre, since it depends, in large part at least, on having a kind of audience which Jodelle lacked.

B. Scédase: Life as prison; problems of "mise en scène"

A favorite device of Hardy, one we have already examined with regard to Didon, is to begin his play, whether tragedy, tragi-comedy or pastoral, with a kind of prologue, voiced either by a character who will not appear again or by one of the main characters of the play. The prologue is not normally a plea to the audience, as it usually is in the Elizabethan theatre, but is rather a commentary on man and on the present situation to which we are about to be spectators; but on this situation only in a kind of oblique fashion. Here Archidame presents us with a kind of rhetorical prayer expressing his hope that Sparta not give itself up to luxury, concluding, as we might expect, with a prayer to Juno. This is of some significance, for whereas in Didon we have to do with a subject which, almost of itself, seems to impose an oracular atmosphere, here, in Scédase, Hardy deals with a subject of a quite different nature, at least on the surface. The characters involved are no longer the kings and queens, the demigods of ancient mythology, but people of far lowlier status: Scédase himself is but a poor villager, and if Charilas and Evribiade are aristocrats, they are a long way from being princes. Thus Archidame's prologue here seems very definitely to impose a particular feeling, and a special outlook, upon the matter of the play.

The following scene introduces to us two of the protagonists: Charilas and Evribiade, who enter with their governor, Iphicrate. Immediately the spectator is aware of the import of the prologue: the two youths are sighing after "deux pucelles soeurs" (1. 52), but are being opposed by Iphicrate, who holds up before them the decadence of this lust. Since the prologue has created in the mind of the spectator certain expectations of what is to come, the argument is full of irony for him, not to mention an implicit augur:

Iphicrate: Ilion sans l'amour, & son vainqueur Achille,
N'eussent seruy d'exemple, à quiconque facile
Donne dans les gluaux de ce caut oyseleur,
Et qui semble fatal aux hommes de valeur.
Charilas: Ne t'imagine pas, que telle frénaisie
Incurable domine en nostre fantaisie,
L'vn & l'autre demeure amplement satisfait,
Des faueurs du regard qui neglige l'effet.
Iphicrate: Les yeux premiers atteins, communiquent à l'ame
Cette contagion qui la luxure enflame,
De suite la raison abandonne son fort,
Cede au vice ennemy, qui le chasse plus fort [. . .]
(11. 117-128)

The prophecy implicit in the dispute is soon made stronger by an explicit omen:

Iphicrate: Certain sinistre augure agite ma poitrine,
Tel que le Nort croissant, qui les ondes mutine,
Augure auant-coureur du desastre auenir [. . .]
(11. 141-143)

Again the dispute, the rhetoric, seems to have run ahead of the characters to create a spirit which they are obliged to follow, and from which they may not escape. Any argument seems to bring them headlong against the barrier created by the language, against the atmosphere, which is the divine authority. The simile of the stormy North wind in the mouth of Iphicrate is used to increase the feeling of the oracular. Beneath this it will appear obvious to the spectator that the protestations of the two youths that they are going only to seek hospitality (ll. 149-160), if not actually untrue, are certainly vain.

The second act brings us to the home of the two beauties and their father. It is filled with a certain, rather horrible, irony by which the threatening attitude is continued. We see Scédase busy thanking his gods for their fortunate life (ll. 222-258) and for the gracious organization of the world; a world in which Pangloss could surely have been justified:

> [. . .] De sorte que parmy ces peuples que la terre
> Dans le cercle infiny de sa rondeur enserre
> Chacun, ou vit, ou peut viure content du sort,
> Que tu luy prescris iuge en suprême ressort [. . .]
> (ll. 225-228)

But above all should the lowly villager be content:[10]

> Pour ne pâlir d'envie, & dans vn double coeur
> Loger la trahison, l'assacine rancoeur,
> Pour auoir la parole ainsy que le courage,
> Pour ne faire innocens à personne d'outrage [. . .]
> (ll. 243-246)

With the irony of this passage already making its impression, he follows it by voicing his one regret that he has no son, a regret which is compensated for by his two beautiful and witty daughters, whom he wishes to see married before his death. The contact of the two thoughts seems clearly intended as an ironic prophecy on the part of the author who delights in this kind of intervention, and whose purpose appears the creation and sustaining of the fearful atmosphere already noted in Didon, and created here by the prologue and the succeeding scene. No more here than in Didon can the spectator identify with any character, for no character is presented to him; they speak in terms too general, they are created by rhetoric and they act only in accordance with that rhetoric. And this stylised language is, as we shall shortly see, supported by sets at their disposal.

The spectator soon learns something important for the plot no less than for the atmosphere. Indeed, as apparent in Didon and just as with the characters, the plot situations are created for the benefit of that atmosphere of fearfulness and terror, of oracular dignity and occasionally ironic humour. Scédase is to leave for three days, and, in doing so, he gives his daughters advice whose gravity, given the length of his absence and the peaceful nature of the region in which they live (according to him), seems quite out of accord with the nominal situation. It has, of course, little relation with that situation; it has to do with the tone of the play. His advice, then, consists of a long exhortation (ll. 267-296) that they not permit themselves to be tricked by one of these "ames fraudulentes," for

> En ce siècle peruers les vices dèchainez
> Ne se trouuent que trop de supposts forçenez,
> Capables d'ébranler vn courage pudique [. . .]
> (ll. 283-285)

Here is a change from his previous position that would deny all attempts to create a believable character, if this were Hardy's intention. With no other motivation for this change in attitude, it is only justified by the necessity for mood and in the context of the atmosphere being sustained. Having thus committed "ce joyau passant les perles

Indiennes" (l. 310) to the care of their possessors, Scédase takes his farewell, leaving them overcome by a feeling of dread:

> Evexipe: Hé! Cieux, vne frayeur m'apprehende subite,
> Les cheueux herissez, tout le sein me palpite,
> L'aueugle euenement d'vn presage mortel,
> Me tient comme l'aigneau qu'on destine à l'Autel,
> Me dit que ce départ pour iamais nous sépare,
> Theane: Pareil augure à coup de mon âme s'empare,
> Hélas! cher geniteur de grace differez
> Ce voyage entrepris sous les Dieux colerez.
> (ll. 325-332)

The sudden "presage mortel," the feeling of being "l'aigneau qu'on destine à l'Autel," the sentiment of the "Dieux colerez," the deference again to the atmosphere of the oracle, to the knowledge of the foreordained, sustain the mood already communicated to the spectator:

> As flies to wanton boys, are we to the Gods;
> They kill us for their sport.

The spectator now knows the course of the play. The plot now serves only to link situations, it no longer leads us to a tension through expectation and hope as Racine does, for example; there can be no surprise, for the spectator is aware of the outcome of the play. It becomes a matter of maintaining this atmosphere in which lies Hardy's power.

It is not only through language that this relationship between the spectator and the stage is achieved: it depends also on the sets which were at the disposal of the players. If the language were supported by an elaborately realistic set it would result in an unacceptable anachronism; for in a set which attempted to reach for vraisemblance the elaborate rhetoric of Hardy, which denies reality of this kind, would become no more than an exercise in poetry. If, on the other hand, there were a complete absence of set, a different kind of relationship would have to be set up, and with an audience which made no demands that it be visually satisfied: an audience quite different from that of Hardy. Another alternative is to use an extremely simple set, which is of a single piece, as in the theatre of Racine. This is not to suggest that there was any lack of luxury in the sets of the later theatre, on the contrary:

> Mouvement et Pompe, tels sont les deux caractères du décor de théâtre, étudiés après 1640.[11]

But, as Vanuxem continues in the same article, this luxuriousness of scenery was continuous from the auditorium, and so would tend to link the spectator all the closer with the stage, seconding a language which strives to make the spectator forget he is in a theatre. In the theatre of Hardy, the sets are of a very different nature:

> There was an unbroken tradition of productions with simultaneous sets in France even though it was on its way out when Torelli came to Paris in 1645. With this convention the set was not regarded as an illusionary milieu. It was made up of a conglomeration of localities clearly if symbolically defined but amounting to little more than signs. When this tradition died out it was superceded by sets that gave a stronger atmosphere of probability.[12]

Certainly, within such a set, as Bjurström suggests here, "il ne pouvait y avoir ni illusion ni vraisemblance,"[13] but as far as being pleasing to the view is concerned, there can be little doubt that it would satisfy. We need only glance at the illustrations to Le Mémoire de Mahelot[14] if we doubt their luxuriousness, while Mme. Deierkauf-Holsboer has disproved the old idea of the small size of the Hotel de Bourgogne and the lack of room available on a stage crowded with a number of simultaneous scenes.[15] All in all it seems safe to assume that the manner of scenery and its appearance were sufficient to keep the spectator aware of his being inside a theatre.[16]

The rich, solid language of Hardy never attempts to remove this awareness from the spectator, but to recreate the mythological Cretan labyrinth, the order of life, than which

> Oncques de labyrinthe, ouurage Dedalique,
> N'eut vne obscurité de detours plus oblique.
> (Scédase, IV, 149-950)

If the spectator is given to reflection he may do so within the mood created by Hardy, for he is almost always at a distance from the actions of the characters, if he is not (as the major part of his audience was not), the relationship would presumably be not dissimilar to that created by the melodrama in our era. What is perhaps remarkable, and a constant aspect of Hardy, if not of all his contemporaries, is that even while creating the aspects of the melodrama at one level -- a simple spectacle of disguises, murders, rapes, of heroes and of villains -- he could at the same time awe a spectator with his oracular mood,[17] and contain within it a philosophy of life corresponding to what must have been the essentially harsh condition of the men who were present as spectators. Who knows? Perhaps the fate of Evexipe and Théane, and of their father Scédase, raised in many minds in the wake of the recent wars the reflection of a spectre not easily extinguished. Certainly, the violence of this theatre, its elation often bordering on the mystical, its repeated prayers for tranquillity and happiness, the delusion of its characters as to the real nature of things (as in Charilas' and Evribiade's misconception of their own powers, or in Scédase's misunderstanding of the nature of the world), the final inevitable tragedy compounded on occasion by added injury (as here: Scédase's inability to obtain justice), this tone is not dissimilar to that of d'Aubigné's Tragiques, or other semi-polemical works which came out of the wars.

Hardy belongs, in a sense, to an earlier generation than Montaigne. Or perhaps it is simply that his mood is nearer to that of the people and slower to change. To him the notion of revealing the human situation through a deep study of the individual seems quite alien. Man is a creature caught up in a confusion he cannot pierce and in a system he cannot understand; within it his imagination is constantly dismayed and his will must remain ineffective. Thus his characters turn about in an atmosphere representing a system of things foreordained and which leaves them powerless. If they act to their own advantage, they do so only to realize too late that they can never more find any shelter on their way through the labyrinth:

> Fuyons, hé! Dieu, fuyons, iaçoit que désormais
> Nul azile assez seur ie n'espere jamais.
> (Charilas in Scédase, III, 831-832)

If, on the other hand, they believe their resting place to be sure, their fate is that of Didon, it is that of Scédase and his daughters, of Panthée, of Meleagre and Atalante, of Procris, and of so many others, a fate on whose fulfillment there is no going back. Scédase cannot obtain justice of Agesilas and his council, who remain indifferent to his woes. Those who escape do so rather by accident than through their own efforts (as in Ariadne, Dom Jean in La Belle Egyptienne, or in Gésippe). Here in Scédase, the quasi-legal objections of Androclide, Leonide and Xantippe to the pleas of the bereaved father only reflect the indifference of the gods:

> Depuis que l'homme vient au monde,
> Iusqu'à l'heure de son trépas,
> Mille malheurs lâchent la bonde,
> Inseparables de ses pas:
> Il n'a felicité qui dure,
> Et celuy ce [sic] peut dire heureux,
> A qui la fortune moins dure,
> Ne montre vn front trop rigoureux. (ll. 1253-1260)

In such a situation man can only break the bounds of his prison and flee from the labyrinth in which he suffers, as Evandre comments:

> Depuis que le malheur étoufe l'esperance,
> L'homme doit courageux se tirer de souffrance:
> L'homme doit courageux, malgré l'inique sort,
> Ce qu'il ne peut icy le trouuer chez la mort [. . .]
> (ll. 1349-1352)

C. Mariamne: The human theatre. Hardy and Tristan

There is no sign of irony in the prologue to Hardy's Mariamne: only a violent hatred and a prophecy, a curse brought down upon Herode by the ghost of Mariamne's brother, Aristobule, himself slain by Herode.

> Monstre le plus cruel qui respire la vie,
> Tyran bouffi d'orgueil, & forcené d'enuie,
> Fleau de l'innocence, horreur du genre humain,
> Que fait si longuement ocieuse ta main?
> Comment peut reposer ta dextre carnassiere?
> Ta soif, qu'oncques le sang rebeu ne desaltere? (ll. 1-6)

Already the spectator may see rising before him the shadow of some revolting ogre, an ogre created in a rhetorical world of fantasy -- unless, of course, the more simple-minded spectator trenbled before this evocation of some devil incarnate with whose fear his mother had beguiled the more playful hours of his childhood. However this may be, whether the spectator accepted the literary fiend or believed in a devil, it is in this first passage, as always with Hardy, that the mood of the spectator and of the auditorium begins to be set. Once again the play is to show a series of characters turning about one another under the umbrella of a fate already set out for them:

> [. . .] ce destin moteur de l'vniuers,
> A de pires tourmens te reserve (peruers)
> Te donne mille morts de troubles domestiques,
> Outre vne fin tragique entre les plus tragiques,
> Deuoré de vermine en chaque part du corps,
> Au lieu d'vne, souffrant vn siecle mille morts.
> Poursuy donc, poursuy donc, o scelerat infame,
> Ta haine, ta fureur contre ta propre femme.
> Priue, ennemy commun, de la clarté du jour
> Celle qui te brûloit d'vn idolatre amour. (ll. 27-36)

The notion of the cage of fate, of the labyrinth, formulated as a prophecy, takes its shape from the language which rises up in a solid mass. The atmosphere of which we speak (as distinct from the spectator's relationship to it) is created entirely in this rhetoric, aided probably by the psalmodic chant which appears to have been the normal mode of stage declamation for tragedy in the period. Thus, by the very fact of its being first and foremost a literary invention the artificiality of this creation is apparent; added to the clearly non-illusionary nature of the sets then in use, the spectator, even if he gave all his attention to the performance on stage, must have been kept constantly aware of watching, of being in a theatre. Up to a point also, there would seem to be a contrast between the quasi-religious tone of the language and the romanesque sets, a contrast which would make even stronger the impression of distance. In a theatre such as Racine's the tone more nearly matches the luxurious and immobile sets, whose very immobility offers in itself less of a visual obstacle, and in which no doors or windows open to admit passage or sight of a new character, thus permitting the spectator to be convinced by a language which, from the first, is more easily comprehensible, less obscure and touffu.[18] With Hardy, however, the awe of the spectator under the oppressive atmosphere is accompanied by his conscious *watching* of the stage action. The atmosphere lies over him and over the stage, almost as equals. Although he has to feel it through the agency of one of the stage characters, he comes at it as a product of the language and not at all through any kind of inner tension in the character. After a while, indeed, the characters themselves seem to take on only what nature the language allows them: they talk in a futile effort to understand and to act upon this pressure which is the fatality of the divine will. Their situation seems to become the spectator's own; or at least his relationship to the atmosphere echoes that of the character to destiny. The atmosphere of oppression, of terror, of inevitability, the sense of being trapped, is made to be felt by the spectator and overlays both the stage and the auditorium, in all its subdued uproar. Indeed, the metaphor works in reverse, and Hardy will not seldom liken the situation of his characters to that of the spectator who is watching him; or, at least, the situation of the theatre, of being part of an act, becomes the human situation. Salome reproaches Herode for his love toward Mariamne:

> Maistrise des boüillons d'vne jeunesse folle,
> Sur le theatre humain joüant vn moindre rolle
> On vous excuseroit [. . .] (*Mariamne*, 209-211)

Araspe comments, on the idea of a nation in decadence, that

> Notre theatre humain
> Spectacle plus fréquent sur soy ne represente.
> (*Panthée*, 64-65)

Elsewhere the world is seen as a "theatre miserable" (*Scédase*, 1286), the gods as "spectateurs immobiles" (*Didon*, 1721). This, of course, is a common metaphor for the condition of humanity, but under the situation of which we are speaking, it appears to take on a significance it would not in a non-theatrical situation.

It is impossible for us to say now how far this relationship could go: it would naturally depend also on each individual performance. The significant thing of which we should be aware is that theatrical identification, if it is of any interest at all to the playwright, is far less important to him than the creation of an atmosphere which urges the spectator to a certain frame of mind, into a certain manner of envisioning human action as the play runs its course. And it is a course in which there may be no surprises since the spectator knows its main features almost from the first line of the play. He is not affected to the same extent as he will be in the later theatre by emotion cast into him by the characters; which emotion, if we follow Bullough, invites an absence of intellectual reflection (not on the interests of the play itself but of a kind which would tend to broaden its import) at the time of performance. This does not mean to imply that every spectator -- or even, perhaps, a majority of spectators -- would be given over to reflection, knowing the nature of Hardy's average audience. However, he would be under the influence of this atmosphere, placed at a distance from the character, able to feel his posture as an equal, in terms not of social status necessarily, but of a human being caught up in the maelstrom of the universal system.

He knows then that whatever Herode does is futile: his actions are bound to end with the death of Mariamne, and he will be unable even to say that he has decided his own fate as the Herode of Tristan may.[19] Language, which creates Hardy's characters, and in whose terms alone they may operate, becomes the barrier to any attempt on their part to escape its tyranny and express their freedom, not as the result of a failure to fully realize the nature of their relationship with one another, but because there is no escape from the thread of their destinies. The ghost of Aristobule has prepared the spectator for the Herode who appears to boast of his bloody ascent to the throne, who produces the excellently Machiavellian precept:

> En matière d'estat les preceptes meilleurs,
> Gardons la piété, hormis ce point ailleurs,
> Preuoyans n'espargnons amis ny parentelle,
> Qui sa part auec nous du Royaume querelle[. . .]
> (11. 99-102)

And a little later in this same monologue, Herode, regretting Mariamne's lack of affection for him (Mariamne, whose father and brother he has slain because they tried to prevent him from usurping their kingdom), cries out:

> O Mariamne ingrate! o farouche rebelle!
> Que n'es-tu plus benigne, ou moins chaste,
> ou moins belle? (11. 117-118)

The credibility of this matters little in terms of probability; this is the Herode for whom the audience has been prepared. We know he cannot change, and he too seems already aware of where this course must lead him, powerless to do anything about it:

> Ah! peruerse nature, ah! courage rebours,
> Les yeux clos furieuse à ta perte tu cours. (11. 123-124)

He appears to know as well as the spectator of Mariamne's future death at his hands, and to suspect its effect on himself. Any delays he creates can be nothing more than that, for the rhetoric has already created Mariamne's death, as it has created an atmosphere in which anything but that death is inconceivable. The varying of an atmosphere within a single play is not a device of Hardy's, for he is not interested in the endless possibilities of changing rhetoric or of changing forms: his attitude is simply that man is a part of a massive, and generally cruel, system, whose walls he may beat upon but not break. It is this attitude which pervades the theatre of Hardy.

Thus the figures of poetic rhetoric abound, of which the most apparent to the listener and the most obviously "unrealistic" is the simile: so Herode compares himself to Hercules (11. 77ff.), Pherore likens him to a helmsman at sea:

> Le pilote asseuré du courroux de Neptune,
> Ioüit telle qu'elle est de sa bonne fortune,
> N'a sans cesse ses yeux dans les astres fichez,
> Où ses robustes bras sur le timon panchez:
> Ainsi d'oresnauant les guerres étouffées,
> Par vos braves labeurs terminez en trophées [. . .]
> (11. 129-134)

And it is through the metaphor rather than the actual facts that Pherore reaches the conclusion that Herade has brought about the calm, that he is the "bienfaiteur [. . .] enuers le commun" (144). The character gives the appearance of running headlong into these solid figures, from which he draws conclusions which set him in the appropriate relationship to the other characters. Never does he give the impression of playing with language, he never rejoices in it as do the characters of Rotrou's Diane or Les Occasions perdues.[20] He cannot use it to his own ends, and it is incapable of releasing him from his anxieties:

> Fauorisé de Mars autant qu'homme du monde,
> Ma grandeur affermie a peu d'autres seconde,
> Affluant de richesse, vn point d'aduersité

> Obscurcit le Soleil de ma felicité,
> Rembarre d'vn fleau domestique ma joye,
> De sorte que par tout vn tourment me costoye,
> De sorte que frustré de mon principal bien,
> Cuidant tout posseder ie ne possede rien. (ll. 149-156)

Both ends of this reflection are contained in Aristobule's speech introducing us to the present and the future. The role of Herode is already created, as are those of the characters who surround him. They boast, regret, hate, only in accordance with lines already familiar to the spectator. The character feels, but these feelings can do nothing to help him evade the walls which surround him. As Rigal has said,[21] there is "quelque étude des caractères et des passions," but of character and passion trapped. With Tristan they will be freed to act upon one another outside the oppression which weighs on them in Hardy's theatre, and the spectator's attitude will be changed accordingly.

So Pherore rages against Mariamne just as she is obliged to rage against him. His allegiance has been revealed, just as Aristobule has also created the language of Mariamne (ll. 37-56):

> Mariamne possible, ensuiuant sa coustume,
> D'vne rage d'orgueil encontre vous s'allume,
> Abusant du pouuoir que ce charme d'Amour
> Luy concede sur vous [. . .] (ll. 157-160)

As far as information to the audience is concerned, all this is unnecessary, for the spectator knows it already; he knows what will be the reactions of Herode and his associates once Aristobule, the harbinger, has come and gone. He knows too the attitude he must take towards the one side and the other.

Herode's efforts to dispute the character created for him are bound to fail, but his efforts add an emotional liveliness to the scheme absent from the more static theatre of the more theoretically minded predecessors of Hardy.[22] So, for example, to Pherore's urging that he win Mariamne by force, he protests:

> L'éfort incompatible à sa beauté divine,
> A ce miracle issu de Royalle origine,
> N'aigriroit que ma playe au lieu de l'adoucir,
> Prolongeroit ma peine au lieu de l'acourcir.
> Sa haine, ses dédains, son mépris ordinaire
> Ie prefere aux faueurs d'vne amitié vulgaire.
> (ll. 165-170)

Soon we see Pherore and Salome trying to convince Herode that he kill Mariamne to avoid her supposed plots against his life and throne, in another lively scene. For, like Aenée, although the essential behaviour is ordained under the stifling atmosphere, within these bounds the characters may have the illusion of acting upon one another: the characters, not the spectators. In fact, we see that it will be no more as a result of the plotting of his brother and sister than of a situation created by the rhetoric, that Herode finally condemns Mariamne (Act III).

If Hardy's theatre is characterised by repetition (Mariamne's imprecations against Herode and her curses when she is with her nurse, in Act II, I; her prayers in prison in Act IV, I, both repeat what we have already learned separately from Aristobule, Herode, Pherore and Salome) in his concern to maintain the solemn liturgical atmosphere we have already noticed in Didon, there is another characteristic, not unexpected, which places the stage character in close proximity to the spectator insofar as his attitude towards his situation is concerned.[23] Beneath the atmosphere he has created Hardy can cause his characters to make the same kind of commentary as the spectator might be making: it is an ideal place for the aphorisms and maxims with which this theatre abounds:

7.

Rarement le Tyran paisible s'éjoüit,
De son rapt execrable, & longuement joüit [. . .]
(Mariamne, 479-480)

Celuy triomphe plus, qui triomphe du vice.
(*Panthée*, 189)

Le remors est l'éclair auant-coureur du vice.
(*Panthée*, 305)

Il faut que la raison nos actions tempere.
(*Panthée*, 515)

As Salome plots with the *Eschanson* to have Mariamne accused of trying to poison Herode (ll. 529-480), the latter comes up with what is really a piece of social commentary:

Eschanson: De nos conditions la disparité grande
Dissout assez le noeud de semblable demande,
Vous exempte du joug redoutable des loix,
Moy prest de succomber si ie m'en préualois.
Salome: Conjoints en ce dessein de gloire & de fortune,
Presumez du surplus toute chose commune.
Exchanson: L'vsage journalier apprend que les petits
Demourent impuissans du malheur engloutis,
Portent seuls opprimez la peine temeraire
Des projets suggerez [. . .] (ll. 609-618)

(This, which takes here the form of a maxim, we have already seen played out in our examination of *Scédase*). Once more, it would be possible to show numerous examples of this further means employed by Hardy, whether deliberately or accidentally, to place the character in a similar relationship to the overall atmosphere as the spectator. The characters regularly give this impression of withdrawing from their own actions in order to make a comment upon them. Yet, if they are capable of such abstraction upon occasion, and Herode may do it as much as any of the other characters, they soon return to the blind condition of their actions, drawn on, as before, by the power of the language which envelops them:

> Serpent enflé d'orgueil, fere ingrate sortie
> Des antres Caspiens, ou des rocs de Scythie,
> Tigresse qui d'humain ne retiens que le front,
> Crois-tu qu'impunément ie porte cest affront?
> Cuides-tu me brassant injure sur injure,
> Qu'insensible d'honneur, sans cesse ie l'endure?
> (11. 705-710)

Herode cries out against Mariamne when she refuses him her favours, unable to see the justice in the treatment he receives from Mariamne, or the parity between his usurpation and her supposed attempts on his life, he can only rage against her and his fate:

> Du prodige entendu le poil me herissonne,
> Vne stupide horreur mes membres enuironne,
> O Cieux! ô Terre! ô Mer! hé! comment souffrez-vous
> Des execrations si grandes entre nous?
> [. . .] (11. 897-908)

There shortly occurs an interesting dialogue between Herode and Mariamne, which shows just how far the characters are captive:

> M.: Libre ie veux mourir ainsi que ie fus née.
> H.: Hé! quelle liberté ne t'ay-je pas donnée,
> Maistresse de mon ame & de mes volontez,
> Parauent les desseins de ce meurtre tentez?
> (11. 1017-1020)

Perhaps it is they who created their situation through their own will (this we cannot know, but, in any case, it has nought to do with the play), but now certainly, they have no power over it, they may continue to strive, but they are like so many moths beating vainly against the walls of a light. She is prisoner of Herode's desires, desires over which he has no control, and even her attempts to free herself from them are under the control of another agent. The achievement of her own death has little to do with her. Herode, confronted in the trial scene by the eunuch, is unable to go beyond the idea of the accusation he seeks, the accusation of adultery against Mariamne. Yet this very notion of her guilty love for Soesme, which is what ultimately condemns Mariamne (not the whispers of Pherore and Salome of her attempts on Herode's life), this notion itself has no reality beyond the one that has been created for it in the dispute between Mariamne, Herode and Soesme (Act III). In the end it is the rhetoric which condemns Mariamne.

In the final act, after the messenger has announced Mariamne's execution, Herode's first reaction is to reproach the gods, not himself; it is as though he suddenly feels the responsibility for the situation lies with them rather than with humanity:

> Qu'à ton chef-d'oeuure, ô Ciel! n'as-tu presté secours?
> Que n'as-tu retardé l'effect de ma colère? (ll. 1450-1451)

When the messenger continues to relate how Mariamne's mother cursed her as she passed on her way to the headsman's block, Herode exclaims:

> O grande cruauté! que le Ciel & la terre,
> Ensemble t'ont liuré vne cruelle guerre [. . .]
> (ll. 1519-1520)

Heaven and earth together are the rulers of man's fate, not man himself. Yet again Herode cries out in despair and dismay:

> [. . .] O astres inclemens!
> O Ciel! injuste Ciel, parfides Elements,
> Et ne pouuiez-vous pas resister à ma haine?
> Et ne deuiez-vous pas me répandre sa peine?
> Mariamne défaite! [. . .] (ll. 1565-1569)

Finally Herode relinquishes all effort of will and truly gives himself up to the rule of the heavens in a kind of madness, a visionary exaltation which appears as the exaggeration of the habitual state of mind of Hardy's heroes:

> Las! Helas! ie n'attens de reuoir que son ombre
> Cruelle épouuantable, en la demeure sombre,
> Armée de flambeaux, de tortures, de fers,

> Que dis-je ja déja hors du sueil des Enfers,
> Suiuie d'vne bande affreuse elle s'élance,
> Pardonne à mon outrage, & à ma violence,
> Pardonne moy ma vie, à grands coups redoublez
> Ie m'en vay satisfaire à tes Manes troublez,
> Plomber ce sein caduc, me déchirer la face,
> Arracher ces cheueux, me meurtrir sur la place,
> Ha cruel! ha bourreau, quelle punition
> Feroit de ton forfait digne expiation? (11. 1611-1622)

As we have seen, there is no paradox in the last part of this lament, for acceptance of responsibility does not mean the act has been the result of the exercise of a free will. The will is free only within the bounds allowed by fatality. Further, the punishment received by Herode will not be at his own hands: he has already been promised by Aristobule in the prologue

> [. . .] vne fin tragique entre les plus tragiques
> [. . .] (11. 30)

However, if announced, this punishment has nothing to do immediately with the play as conceived by Hardy, and the idea of inescapable destiny seems bound up with the irrelevance of the punishment: as in Scédase, as in Didon, as, to some extent, in Panthée (Araspe), the guilty parties will be left unaffected by any stigma through social morality. It never appears Hardy's purpose to preach morality. In the later theatre, the guilty will normally be punished along with the innocent (Tristan, for example, was obliged to change the ending of his Panthée, so that Araspe also died;[24] Venceslas is one exception), but for Hardy the exigencies of moral instruction are of no importance, and he is free to portray the sufferings of the human condition.

Jacques Madeleine, commenting on the "progress" made by Tristan in his Mariane over that of Hardy, made a remark concerning the building of the characters which may help to reveal much of the difference between the earlier and the later play (and which from the attitude Madeleine takes toward it, reveals many of the dangers inherent in judging the products of one generation through comparison with those of another alone):[25]

> Ainsi Mariamne, en sa chambre, confie à sa vieille nourrice les sanglants griefs qu'elle a contre Hérode. Elle hait ce tyran au point que, si elle pouvait se défaire de luy, elle n'hésiterait pas. C'est un grand tort qu'elle aille jusqu'à dire cela. Du fait de cet aveu, la calomnie que l'on ourdira contre elle aura moins d'invraisemblance, en tout cas nous choquera moins. Josèphe ne parlant de rien de tel, Hardy a été mal inspiré d'ajouter ce trait malencontreux.

As we have tried to show, at some length, Hardy is not interested in the kind of shock that interests Tristan and his spectator. It is precisely the portrayal of the inescapable nature of things that characterizes Hardy's theatre, and to shock the spectator would imply that the audience had remained unaware of this. If this were the case, both the prologue of Aristobule and the repetitive scenes of Pherore, Salome and Mariamne, would be quite incomprehensible. If Hardy sought to shock his spectator in this way he would also be claiming a quite different kind of relationship between the stage and the auditorium: one which demanded a much closer interest in the characters themselves rather than in their situation. The same must apply to any concern for the motivation of Herode's fury toward Mariamne.[26] Whether it be her refusal to grant him her favours, her supposed attempts on his life, her supposed adultery, or simply his desire to "faire plier Mariamne devant lui," these are of relative unimportance as real or not (if "reality" is the problem, there is surely no less reality, if less vraisemblance, in a fluctuation between motives than in the single-minded attention to one), their importance is not in their revelation of character or of the relationships between characters, but as stages on the road to Calvary.

However, it is not simply in the changed attention to the characters that the play has been changed. Tristan has done away with the ghost of Aristobule. The exposition is now done through a dream, as Herode wakes abruptly at the start of the play:

> Fantosme injurieux qui troubles mon repos.

Immediately the spectator receives the shock of which we have been speaking, shock which brings the spectator up against a character's sensibility. Instead of being faced with the ghost, and thus regarding the play as though the various reactions of the characters to a situation with which he is already familiar, the spectator sees it through the eyes of a character, he will consider the unfolding of the plot through the eyes and the sensibilities of Herode. Hardy's overshadowing atmosphere disappears to be replaced by the spectator's anxiety.

To retain this kind of attention calls for a certain vraisemblance that it was by no means necessary for Hardy to capture. This is why there must now be a logical connection, on the whole, between scenes: Pherore and the Captain of the Guard come running in response to the same anxiety felt by the spectator as Herode cries out for help:

> Mais quoy? le front me suë, & ie suis hors d'haleine,
> Mon ame en ce repos a trouué tant de peine
> A se desabuser d'vne fascheuse erreur,
> Que i'en suis tout émeu de colere & d'horreur.
> Hola. (11. 11-15)

The following scene makes even more apparent the personal nature of the new play. The consolation and its manner, the discourse on the physiological causes of dreams (ll. 48-74), seem an effort to create of both Pherore and Herode recognizable characters. These no longer have the semi-biblical features of Hardy's rôles; they are closer -- as characters -- to the spectator, and so their emotions are more easily taken over by him. The same is quite clear throughout the play in such scenes as the one Tristan has added between Mariane and Salome in which they confront one another in a bitterly gentle attack (II, 2), or in the new trial scene (III). As Herode relates his dream (I, 3) a new fantasy world is created, a world of language, much as was Hardy's. Now, however, there is a sharp difference, for since we have been placed in relation with a character with whom we may feel, whose reaction we have seen before we know what has provoked it and whose feelings are thus communicated without the need of language, so the language has become "transparent," at least to a degree, although it may not remain so throughout. That is to say, the spectator will seem to see through the language to the dream which has been the result of Herode's worries, and which is presented as such. Now we seem to know the character before the language he uses; the spectator is, as it were, behind the language with Hérode, instead of being in front of it as a solid mass:

> Ne m'interromps donc pas quand i'auray commencé.
> La lumiere & le bruit s'espandoient par le monde:
> Et lors que le Soleil qui se leue de l'onde
> Esleuant au cerueau de legeres vapeurs [. . .]
> (ll. 86-89)

Tristan seems well aware that to allow a long unbroken récit of the dream could very well create just the barrier he does not want,[27] and so he takes care first to justify its length logically (l. 86), and then to break it where possible (ll. 107-109), and, finally, when the dream is completed, a series of quick responses returns us to the characters:

> Hérode: Salome, qu'en dis-tu?
> Salome: Moy? ie dis que i'en tremble.
> Pherore: Ie ne celeray pas que i'en suis effrayé.
> Salome: C'est quelque auis du Ciel qui vous est envoyé.
> Hérode: L'auis à déchifrer est si fort difficile
> Qu'il n'eust pû m'obliger d'vn soin plus inutile.
> Salome: L'Estat, d'vn changement peut estre menacé.
> (ll. 140-145)

Thus, in a totally different tone and context, the idea of prophecy is once again introduced. Instead of an oracle, in accordance with which all the characters must act, or with whose utterances their actions are continually compared, we now have it presented as information to a single character, told to us by the one most directly affected, and coloured for the spectator by the character from whom we learn it. While man is still ruled by an all-seeing fate:

> Ce qu'escrit le Destin ne peut estre effacé.
> Il faut bon-gré, mal-gré, que l'ame resoluë
> Suiue ce qu'a marqué sa puissance absoluë:
> De ses pieges secrets on ne peut s'afranchir,
> Nous y courons plus droit en pensant les gauchir.
> (ll. 146-150)

this fate is not revealed, and, presented by the character, it is a destiny coming from within him, not imposed from without. Whatever may be the hubris of Hérode's next utterance, it is nonetheless no longer proferred as defiance of a necessary fate imposed on all, but as that of a destiny imposed particularly:

> Mais qui me peut choquer? & qu'ay-je plus à craindre
> Au faiste du bon-heur où l'on me voit atteindre?
> Rien n'est assez puissant pour me perdre auiourd'huy,
> Si le Ciel en tombant ne m'accable sous luy:
> Ie ne puis succomber que par vne auanture
> Dont le coup soit fatal à toute la Nature. (ll. 115-160)

Man no longer appears as the plaything of nature, so, in the theatre, he is not now shown as submerged under an all-embracing weightiness; he is a reflection of nature, he is the microcosm, and if the one collapses, then so does the other. As Dalla Valle puts it: from corrupt nature, man as microcosm,

> non può che deridarne la certezza della propria misera, non può che dedurne la fatale fragilità e corruptibilità dell'essere umano, "qui se mine à toute heure et se destruit sans cesse."[28]

To echo this feeling in the theatre the character himself must become the centre of all things, it is through him and by his emotions and sensibilities that the spectator must be made aware, must be made to feel the relationships with the universe.

However, we are not yet come to the classical theatre and there is another side to Tristan of considerable significance here, although Dalla Valle refers to it as the "aspetto deteriore e marginale del barocchismo di Tristan."[29] This is his use of verbal extravagance, of *pointes*, of *concetti*, of similes and the rest.

In his translation of *La Mariane* (1793), Compagnoni[30] made the following remark:

> La verità tragica non soffre similitudini. Queste tradiscono il grande interesse della illusionè, poichè lo spettatore vede per esse facilmente il poeta, e il poeta non deve vedersi mai.

This may be true up to a point, but he is speaking of a different notion of the tragic. It is not simply a matter of revealing a universe which carries within it the seeds of its own destruction by showing the psychology of an individual, or rather, by placing the spectator into the emotions of that individual. The artist of Tristan's period is still less sure of himself than is the artist of a later generation, or, for that matter, he of the preceding generation. His view has been thrown off balance, but he is not yet in a position to readjust it. He must find a new base quite dissimilar from the old, but in the meantime he has lost his support and finds himself in a position where he can no longer be sure of man's position in the universe. He is no longer a minute part overshadowed by an immense whole, nor is he yet able to stand up and shout at the universe with impunity. He begins to see himself as carrying the universe within him, but is still unsure of what this universe consists and what are his own powers. On the stage, therefore, the spectator cannot be allowed to see the universe directed by a mind, or echoed in a mind, since the author can only stumble towards the portrayal of something he does not yet know. The mind wavers. Perhaps this is why we continually see the author, why the spectator does not "identify" at all times with a character; for at times the character disappears entirely, to be replaced by the poet, with whom there can be no such relationship on the part of the spectator: by a kind of maxim:

> L'Homme à qui la Fortune a fait des auantages,
> Est comme le vaisseau sauué de cent orages;
> Qui subiet toutefois aux caprices du sort,
> Peut se perdre à la rade, ou perir dans le port.
> (ll. 151-154)

through conceits:

> Aueugles Deïtez, egalez mieux les choses,
> Meslez moins de lauriers auecque plus de roses [. . .]
> (ll. 219-220)

Hérode of Mariane:

> Si le diuin objet dont ie suis idolatre
> Passe pour vn rocher, c'est vn rocher d'albastre,

Vn escueil agreable, où l'on voit esclater
Tout ce que la Nature a fait pour me tenter.
Il n'est point de rubis vermeils comme sa bouche,
Qui mesle vn esprit d'ambre à tout ce qu'elle touche,
Et l'esclat de ses yeux veut que mes sentimens
Les mettent pour le moins au rang des diamans.
(11. 271-278)

Dina to Mariane echoes similar sentiments in a different context:

Votre teint composé des plus aimables fleurs,
Sert trop long-temps de lit à des ruisseau de pleurs.
(11. 437-438)[31]

One could cite many more. Their effect is to prevent continuous identification; they set up a kind of fluctuating distance whereby the spectator is at one moment feeling with the character, at another watching him as a poetic creation -- and, perhaps, creator. This seems to echo the idea of general uncertainty portrayed often through metamorphosis as demonstrated by Rousset. We may not yet, as I have suggested, see the universe through a character with its implication of certain and logical relationships and effects since we lack that confidence, nor may we any longer watch him struggle against an always solid wall, since we no longer know his relationship to that wall. Hardy's labyrinth, with its blank walls, its turns and its frustrations, has suddenly become a hall of distorting mirrors in which we can only know which figure is not the reflection by being ourselves that figure. We can only be sure of our own mind. We can tell that it perceives, but the problem lies in what it perceives.

By its very nature, the theatre itself deals with all these problems of reality and illusion which seem particularly the concern of the artists of the period we are now discussing, and it is scarcely surprising that during a brief period it actually turns to examine itself. This concern (and the sudden growth of interest in the theatre which is apparent) must be seen as closely bound up with the philosophical problems of interest to the period, problems which must go arm in arm with aesthetic concerns -- not to mention, particularly in the theatre, other concerns of particular interest to the general member of an audience. Let us not forget that at precisely this period that audience is changing:

> L'evolution est rapide: les spectateurs qui, en 1626, assurent le succès de _La Sylvie_ de Mairet sont déjà très différents de ceux qui applaudissaient _Scédase_ ou _Phraarte_. En 1656 avec le _Timocrate_ de Thomas Corneille, l'évolution est achevée: un public à peu près homogène est désormais constitué.[32]

The aristocrat remains, but now his wife or mistress comes to the theatre without danger of a slur on her reputation. Certainly the Theatre itself has been cleaned up, but even this points to a change in attitude. More important, however, are the bourgeois, the _nouveaux riches_, those aspiring to raise themselves in the social ranking -- they come to the theatre as men on the move, as men changing, or eager to change, their relative social position. Before long it will be they whom Richelieu and his successors will be elevating to important positions in the bureaucracy of government. At all levels, except perhaps the highest and the lowest, society is in a state of flux, the old certainties of rank and position suddenly replaced by doubts. The aesthetic change, the mirror of metaphysical doubt, also reflects the social situation. It is impossible, I believe, for these analogies to be taken too far: they are inextricably tangled; and in a study of one we should at least be aware of the circumstances of the others.

The *Mariane* of Tristan, then, falls somewhere between Hardy and the "classical" ideal, perhaps nearer to the latter, and at the end of the play we remain with doubts as to any absolutes concerning Herode's character, and we remain less than sure as to just how far a man's actions reveal either him or the universe in which he lives: as Narbal says:

> Tu sçais donner des loix à tant de Nations,
> Et ne sçais pas regner dessus tes passions.
> Mais les meilleurs esprits font des fautes extrêmes,
> Et les Rois bien souvent sont esclaves d'eux-mesmes.

Man is yet the microcosm of the imperfect. His will remains an unreliable instrument. He has lost the certainty of his relationship with the macrocosm, but he has yet to replace it with the certainty of his own reason.

The subject of *Panthée* obtains similarly differing treatments at the hands of Hardy and Tristan, and reveals the same difference of intent already visible in their two methods of presenting the story of Herod and his queen. As we have seen with other plays, Hardy starts his *Panthée* with a prologue, here one of praise between Cirus and Araspe, before the spectator is placed before the moving dialogue between Cirus and Panthée herself. Again tone is created with great blocks of majestic language, before being fragmented for the presentation of the characters. Again the characters continually bring their miseries up to the level of the exalted, becoming the butts of fate within the majestic vault upon whose stage they find themselves: Araspe falls in love with Panthée:

> Agité du flambeau d'vne aueugle furie,
> Perclus de mouuemens, ma conscience perie:

> Réduit à n'esperer qu'vn honteux desespoir,
> Réduit à desirer ma ruyne, & la voir;
> Fut-il onc vn desastre, vn malheur memorable,
> A la fiere rigueur de mon sort comparable?
> [. . .] (11. 209-276)

Once more the fate of the characters is prophesied beforehand and throughout the play, prayers and imprecations guide them, and the language shuts them in.

Again, as with _la Mariane_ Tristan quickly shows his concern with a _vraisemblable_ motivation of the characters. He makes sure the arrival of Abradate is realistically caused: Panthée has sent him a letter asking him to come and fight for Cirus in return for the latter's magnanimity towards herself: thus she too shows herself first magnanimous, so making Araspe's crime the more deplorable (he has not yet been overcome with passion). It is she who first has the idea of Abradate's fighting for Cirus (she is yet ignorant of Cirus' hope expressed in I.I [p. 452]),[33] and who takes the first steps towards it. Both she and Cirus are thus placed on equal terms of heroic stature: it also further motivates her suicide in the final act. Tristan, sensing no doubt that this changing of sides on the part of Abradate would detract from his stature in the eyes of the spectator, adds further _vraisemblance_ to the matter, by adding the idea of Abradate's evil liege:

> Panthée: [. . .] ce nouveau Tyran, lâche et cruel ensemble,
> [. . .]
> Il est impie, injuste, insolent, & trompeur,
> Il ne se fait servir qu'en donnant de la peur;
> Son âme dans le crime est toûjours occupée,
> Ce n'est que de la boüe en du sang détrempée,
> On ne peut l'assister sans quelque lâcheté,
> Et l'on peut le quitter par générosité. (p. 456)

He has, in fact, already tried to separate her and Abradate, a piece of information which, apart from the particular role it plays in creating the vraisemblance of which we are speaking here, and without being a prophecy as it would have been in Hardy, yet prepares the spectator for what is to come. The last detail of this "probable" motivation is filled in when Cirus questions whether Abradate would have so "legere" a spirit as to change sides even given the situation we have just learned from Panthée, and when these last doubts are answered by Hidaspe (I.5, p. 460). The direction of Tristan's adjustment is clear: the spectator learns of the character's motivation before the occurrence, so that he will not be inclined to stop at the moment to wonder at the character's behaviour, a wonder which would inevitably remove his emotions from the stage. Another important change follows what we have already shown with Mariane: the love interest is strengthened and Tristan even adds a scene (II.3, pp. 480-484) in which Araspe pretends to be writing a poem for a friend and recites it as such to Panthée, thus avowing his love to her (he has already confessed once to Charis, Panthée's companion [I.7, pp. 464-467]). Later (V.1) Araspe rejoices in Abradate's death, supposing it to give him freedom to win Panthée, and finally he kills himself to rejoin Panthée in death (V.9).[34] The importance of this strengthening is that it gives Tristan full reign as a poet, giving rise to similar effects as noted in Mariane.

The difference, then, seems to be clear. The relationship in the theatre of Hardy seems to be the eye of the spectator meeting that of the character under a stifling atmosphere created by the language. Above all the former must see this character move, he must see him struggling against this atmosphere. And perhaps it is this which accounts both for Hardy's success and his importance, for while a deeper need in his theatre called for this more reflective attitude, a shallower desire for simple entertainment in the audience was satisfied and able to respond at that level even when unable to go beyond. It is noticeable that the period of Hardy's decreasing popularity corresponds not to a time when there no longer remained any desire for entertainment, but to the beginning of a period when man began to feel that he was perhaps after all the possessor of a strong and free will, or at least that he was not just the plaything of the gods; to a period when the effects of the functioning of this will were beginning to reveal themselves as satisfactorily sturdy, and apparently so as a result of that very affirmation of strength which for Hardy was not possible. The creation of atmosphere is a major concern for Hardy whether it be tragic, tragi-comic (which is lighter, but still gives the impression of exaltation we have noticed in the tragedies), or the pastoral. In the last the tone is light, happy, humorous from the first to the last, it inspires the spectator with a certain joy and removes his fears, yet there still remains the atmosphere to draw on the characters, as in the others.[35] With this atmosphere, then, Hardy is able to make his spectator feel before he gets to know the characters in any sense.

Reliance on human power means in literature that its medium, language, may take on an infinity of meanings at the whim of the mind, an infinity of meanings which, in turn, may lead one on to a better understanding of the nature of this universe which is hidden to direct perception. Language experiments with form, but guided by the person who wields it. It will be upon this principle that one kind of theatre will base itself, a theatre which continues to rely largely upon language, but whose characters control that language. On the other hand, this questioning leads to a parallel questioning of the theatre itself, and produces such plays as the *Comédie des comédiens* of Gougenot (1633) and Scudéry (1634), *l'Illusion comique* (1636), *Les Visionnaires* (1637), *L'Hopital des fous* (1635), it leads to a systematic portrayal of madness on the stage (*Les Folies de Cardenio* [1625], *La Folie du Sage* [1644], *l'Hypocondriaque* [1628]); deception becomes a chief stock-in-trade, metamorphosis, illusion and other devices question the accepted form of the divine system as they pose a problem as to the nature of the theatre which echoes the system.

This theatre will be very far from that of Hardy, who strove to put his spectator into the situation of his character through his atmosphere. Henri Gouhier recently made a comment about the nature of the tragic:

> Le tragique [. . .] est une dimension de l'existence réelle. La tragédie est de l'ordre de la littérature et du théâtre, mais le tragique est de l'ordre de la vie.[36]

Hardy, it seems to me, tried to place his spectator in the order of the tragic.

NOTES

[1] Eugène Rigal, *Alexandre Hardy et le théâtre français à la fin du XVIe et au commencement du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1889), 254.

[2] Rigal, *op. cit.*, 255.

[3] Hardy, *Théâtre* I (v. bibliography), 5, 11.42ff.

[4] Rigal, *op. cit.*, passim; and Deierkauf-Holsboer, "Vie d' Alexandre Hardy, Poète du Roi," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, XCIV, 4 (Oct. 24, 1947), 328-404 and passim.

[5] See, for example, Raymond Lebègue, "Quelques survivances de la mise en scène médiévale," in *Mélanges d'histoire du théâtre du moyen-âge et de la renaissance, offerts à Gustave Cohen* (Paris: Nizet, 1950), 219-226. Also, L. Petit de Julleville, *Les Mystères* (Paris: Hachette, 1880), I, 451-453.

[6] S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, *L'histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre français à Paris de 1600 à 1673* (Paris: Nizet, 1960), 19.

[7] *Le Public de théâtre et son histoire* (Paris: P.U.F., 1964), 25.

[8] Préface to *L'Aminte* du Tasse (1631).

[9] In the preface to his *Amaranthe*, Gombauld makes the following remark, which seems to suggest the chorus was not an unusual part of a play:

> Ie passe des Scenes aux Choeurs qui n'ont pas les moindres beautez de l'action, sinon en l'opinion de ceux qui ne font rien qu'à demy, & qui les tiennent pour choses vaines, pour ce qu'ils en ignorent l'usage. C'est là que les loüanges, les plaintes, les descriptions, les Fleurs de Retorique, & les belles pensées peuuent aller en foule; & qu'il faut recueiller les iugemens, les resolutions, & les meilleurs sentimens qui peuuent inspirer les personnes & les choses qui ont esté representées. Ainsi la Beauté, l'Amour & la Ialousie des Nymphes, sont les trois sujets de mes premiers Choeurs [in *l'Amaranthe*].

For some fuller comments, concerning not only the problem of the chorus, but the whole question of performance, see Jules Haraszti, éd., *Jean de Schelandre, Tyr et Sidon on les funestes amours de Belcar et Meliane*. Tragedie (Paris: Cornély, 1908), xxxiii-xxxvi.

[10] Compare *Didon se sacrifiant*, 11.597-616 (v. supra 43).

[11] Jacques Vanuxem, "Le décor du théâtre sous Louis XIV," *XVIIe Siècle*, XXXIX (1958), 197.

[12] Per Bjurström, *Giacomo Torelli and Baroque Stage Design* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1961), 196.

[13] M. J. Moynet, L'Envers du théâtre, machines et décorations (Paris: Hachette, 1888), 17.

[14] See Bibliography, Pt. 1, b).

[15] Op. cit., 49-51.

[16] If we may believe anything found in laudatory verses, Lamy gives a hint of this effect in a verse to Hardy (Théatre II), when he speaks of reaction:

> Plus souuent on se sent toucher,
> Si faut-il pourtant qu'on en rie,
> Puis qu'on ne scauroit se fascher
> D'vne si iuste tromperie. (p. 5, LL. 45-48)

[17] Awe is one of the constant attitudes reflected in the laudatory verses dedicated to Hardy.

[18] v., also supra 54.

[19] v., for example, the discussion of Claude K. Abraham, The Strangers. The Tragic World of Tristan l'Hermite, Univ. of Florida Monographs. Humanities no. 23 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966).

[20] See Chapter III.

[21] Op. cit., 254.

[22] v., introduction, I.

[23] v. supra 58-59.

[24] Abraham, op. cit., 62.

[25] Tristan, La Mariane, éd. Jacques Madeleine (Paris: Hachette, 1917), xiv-xv.

[26] Idem.

[27] Tristan's Avertissement to the reader says the following:

Voy ceste peinture en son iour, & n'y cherche pas des finissemens qui pourroient affoiblir en quelque sorte la hardiesse du dessein: Ie ne me suis pas proposé de remplir cét ouurage d'imitations Italiennes, & de pointes recherchées; i'ai seulement voulu descrire auec vn peu de bienséance, les diuers sentimens d'vn Tyran courageux & spirituel, les artifices d'vne femme enuieuse & vindicatiue, & la constance d'vne Reine dont la vertu meritoit vn plus fauorable destin. Et i'ay dépeint tout cela de la maniere que i'ay creu pouuoir reussir dans la perspectiue du Theatre; sans m'attacher mal à propos à des finesses trop estudiées; & qui font paroistre vne trop grande affectation, en vn temps où l'on fait plus d'estat des beautez qui sont naturelles, que de celles qui sont fardées.

[28] Daniela Dalla Valle, *Il teatro di Tristan l'Hermite*. *Saggio storico e critico*, Univ. di Torino. Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, XV, Fasc. 2 (Torino: Giappicelli, 1964), 146. The quotation is from *La Folie du Sage*, 1.1010.

[29] *Op*. *cit*., 138.

[30] v. Dalla Valle, *op*. *cit*., 134.

[31] Dalla Valle quotes two other examples: ll. 1448-1450; ll. 1470-1474.

[32] Descotes, *op*. *cit*., 23.

[33] The version in *Theatre François* (v. bibliography) which I have used has I.4. twice, which also puts the succeeding scenes of the first act off their numbering. I have readjusted the numbering in my references, and have given the page numbers where necessary to further facilitate reference.

[34] I must confess to not understanding Dabney's putting the role of Araspe in Tristan and Hardy on a par, when he suggests the love interest in both to be minor: in Hardy it covers but Act II, and Act III.1, but in Tristan it is considerable. (v. Lancaster E. Dabney, *French Dramatic Literature in the Reign of Henri IV*. *A Study of the Extant Plays composed in French between 1589 and 1610* (Austin: The University Cooperative Society, 1952), 181.

[35] Tristan makes a comment on this changing atmosphere in some *Stances* dedicated to Hardy (Theatre III, 6):

> S'il découure vne jeune ardeur;
> Où s'il exprime vne pudeur,
> Sa veine est toute douce, où bien toute innocente;
> Mais lors que le sujet l'oblige à s'irriter,
> On trouue que sa Scene est aussy menaçante
> Que les foudres de Jupiter. (ll. 13-18)

[36] In "Tragique et transcendance: Introduction à un débat général," in *Le Théâtre tragique* (Paris: CNRS, 1962), 479.

III. 1625-1635: THE SPECTATOR AND THE THEATRE OF DOUBT

O pauvre comédie, objet de tant de veines,
Si tu n'es qu'un portrait des actions humaines,
On te tire souvent sur un original
A qui, pour dire vrai, tu ressembles fort mal!
(Corneille, La Galerie du Palais, I.7)

Que souvent notre esprit trompé de l'apparence
Règle ses mouvements avec peu d'asseurance!
Qu'il est peu de lumière en nos entendements,
Et que d'incertitude en nos raisonnements!
Qui voudra désormais se fie aux impostures
Qu'en notre jugement forment les conjectures,
Tu suffis pour apprendre à la postérité
Combien la vraisemblance a peu de vérité.
(Corneille, Clitandre, V. 4 -- King to Clitandre)

In the years immediately following the era of Hardy, the theatre becomes more and more self-conscious. At first this self-consciousness is a matter more of references and occasional remarks, but it quickly leads to a complete re-examination of the nature of the theatre. In the anonymous comedy Les Ramonneurs (c. 1624),[1] Galaffre tells his master, Scanderbec, that he should speak more softly because of

> ce peuple Badaut qui s'assemble, et s'imagine qu'en vertu de quelques charmes vous allez métamorphoser ce misérable Toict à pourceaux en quelqu'autre Luxembourg. (I.1, p. 4)

Later on Martin mocks Bonarsius, telling him his disciples will be able to go and see performed "l'histoire de ces belles amours dans un hotel de Bourgogne" (IV.10, pp. 133-134),[2] while Scanderbec himself, sending for provisions for the proposed feast at the end of the play, turns towards the auditorium:

> Je me doute bien que vous autres Spectateurs attendez qu'on vous convie à ce festin, mais l'incommodité du lieu [. . .] me dispense de vous en prier davantage; chacun donc se retire chez soy au petit pas. (V.8, p. 164)

In Rotrou's La Bague de l'Oubly (1628-1629), Mélite remarks of Liliane's failure to recognize the King:

> Bons dieux! comme elle ment d'une facon hardie!
> On diroit que ces jeux sont une comédie.
> (III.5 vol. 1, p. 137)

Dorimant, in La Galerie du Palais (1632 or 1633), turns to Aronte to ask him:

> C'est donc en ce Marais que finit ton voyage?
> (IV.2.1. 1085)

while Chrysante, in the same play, remarks of a suggested marriage between herself and Pleirante:

> Cela sentirait trop sa fin de comédie.
> (V.8.1. 1794)

Each of these examples, and there are many more, presents the extreme case of the reduction of the spectator's "psychical distance" to zero. The stage illusion becomes reality: the spectator is made aware of the theatrical nature of the scene he is watching. The actor becomes himself or, at least, plays the part of the actor, and, calling the attention of the spectator with extreme obviousness to the illusion, leaves his role on one side for a brief moment. Certainly, all these examples are taken from comedies, and one may convincingly argue that this device is very common in this genre at any time in the theatre's history. Bergson has suggested that laughter is possible only if the spectator is intellectually and emotionally indifferent to the victim of his laughter. Thus, in the theatre, awareness of the illusory nature of what he is watching prevents any kind of identification with a character from occurring, and the comic relationship is made possible. I do not intend to dispute this position: the farces and sotties, the comedies of Molière, all tend to use the spectator in the same way, and all force him right away to be aware that he is watching. Once the spectator is kept at this point of awareness, he may enter a new kind of relationship, where the illusions of the stage become his own not because his emotions become involved with those of a stage character so that he sees through the sensibilities of this character, but because he stands with the actor at the first level of illusion. In comedy it is necessary that he laugh, the methods of preventing his belief need not be too subtle. In forms of the theatre where the spectator is to remain serious more care is needed, since too abrupt a recalling of the illusion may result in laughter regardless of when this recalling is done, so that if used at all it must there be used very sparingly. There are, however, other ways of achieving this fluctuating distance in the spectator, ways which are the very essence of the so-called baroque theatre.

If a certain tension is maintained by means of an atmosphere which overlays and holds together the latent conflict of the theatrical means at Hardy's disposal, then the loss of this atmosphere implies the simultaneous disappearance of this kind of tension and the release of the conflict. To some extent this is apparent in Tristan's Mariane, but there already that conflict is clearly checked by characters with whom the spectator may identify and by a softening of the elements composing the conflict. Roughly in between the theatre of Hardy and the new "classical" theatre -- of which La Mariane is an early example -- there lies this theatre from which Hardy's atmosphere has disappeared, in which characters are still but figments of the language, and where the four main elements of the conflict -- theme, language, set and actor -- are treated as things quite separate. They dance around one another, they meet, combine and separate again quite independently of any exigency in the plot or of character. Thus a kind of dialectic is set up between these elements which keeps the spectator aware of the theatre and, resuming aesthetically the philosophical -- and perhaps social -- problems faced by the authors, takes the spectator beyond illusion into a somewhat primitive form of "total theatre." I say "primitive" because it still has to depend largely on the text; it is still the text that prompts the dialectic in the absence of technical devices capable of creating by themselves meaningful effects. The banality of the plots, the predilection for nymphs and shepherds (whether in pastoral, tragi-comedy or, indeed, comedy), the emphasis on love and the "problems" created by it, are not simply a sign of the salons' taste for L'Astrée, but a means to reach a more complicated theme inherent in the aesthetic just mentioned. It may be true, as Gill comments, that the particular originality of Les Ramonneurs lies in "cette subordination de l'intrigue à l'intention de faire rire,"[4] although this seems to me to neglect most of the popular comic theatre which preceded it, but what seems certain is the complete subordination of plot in the theatrical output of the period we are discussing to this dialectic of dramatic elements, whether for the sake of laughter or something else:

> Et jamais on n'a veu qu'au récit d'un poëme, on
> ait préoccupé les spectateurs par la

cognoissance du sujet [. . .].[5]

If language appears as the central link between these elements, it is doubtless in part because it is principally the texts that we are able to study, but the language also forms the springboard of the other elements. Nor is the link always connected: on occasion the set itself carries the theme as it changes, while the language speaks of something else. This occurs in Monléon's Amphytrite, when Léandre changes into a rock as he laments (IV.2), thus allowing the actor's setpiece, his lament, to play a counterpoint to the changing form; or in Les Galanteries du Duc d'Ossone,[6] whose shifting walls and curtains play against the shifting and uncertain relationships of the characters. The set may also support the language: the wooded sets themselves seem to echo the complicated tangles found at once in the speeches and the plots of the lovers; it may be that such scenes as the binding of Alexis to the tree in Gombauld's Amaranthe (V.2 ff.) deliberately echo the less concrete obstacles holding back the lovers from one another. At other times the language goes off on its own regardless of the set, and tries to convince the spectator of a reality which has nothing whatsoever to do with the appearance surrounding it (in madness, for example), or the language itself creates that appearance, as occurs at the end of Mairet's Sylvie (V.2) with the growing tension of the spell that eventually bursts into the storm which Florestan is to dispel.

On these occasions it is not left to the sensibility of the individual spectator to feel the play between the various elements: on the contrary, the author is often at pains to indicate it. The last example is a particularly fine one, for as Florestan climbs up the steps towards the magic mirror which he must break in order to set Sylvie and Thelame free from the spell and thus win the hand of Meliphile, he exclaims:

> L'espouuantable objet, l'horrible vision!
> Courage, tout cecy n'est rien qu'illusion.
> (V.2.11. 2071-2072)

Now this is an interesting comment, since the thunder and lightning, the flashes and shadows, are actually stage effects,[7] and therefore real, not only for the spectator but for the stage character Florestan. Above all they are real for him. Not all of the horror achieved by the prince in his discourse would have been reproduced as physical stage effects, but enough of it is there before the spectator's eyes for the words of the actor to make him the more aware that he is before the theatre:

> Mais pourquoy s'amuser à ces objets trompeurs
> Qui ne peuuent donner que de legeres peurs?
> (V.2.11. 2083-2084)

Here the illusion is continued, for even after Thelame has been brought out of the enchantment he continues to think he is dead, and tries to convince Sylvie accordingly (ll. 2123-2151). After the spell, and the supposed illusion, has in fact been broken, it is not until further persuasion by an oracle (ll. 2161-2166), Sylvie and the King (to l. 2176), that he finally comes out of his madness. Thus here the discrepancy between language and visual appearances leads to a whole series of differing illusions: first the King watches the illusion of Thelame and Sylvie -- he and Florestan are an audience just as we are -- then Florestan battles an "illusion" which is not an illusion: its effects are real for him, just as they are for the spectator, even though they are actually at the level of the illusion of Thelame and Sylvie, which, just a moment before, had been fictional for the spectator. Finally Thelame continues in his illusion after the original illusion is broken, while Florestan and the King look on and Sylvie seems to fluctuate somewhere in between. Thus, all the while, the spectator is fluctuating also between several different illusions, identifying with none and having to take a different attitude towards the stage as it passes from illusion to illusion.

Less dramatic, usually, are those occasions when the set appears to provoke the language: as when the scenery leads to lyrical passages on the beauty of the countryside (for example, Sylvie, I.2.11. 111-116, or Auvray, La Madonte, I.3. 14-15),[8] which perhaps to us seem inspired by a literary convention but which, for the spectator, come after the visual stage effects.

This intertwining of the elements of the play is, naturally, extremely complex, and one hesitates to attempt a discussion of them separately for fear of obscuring the problem yet further; but it will, I feel, be easier to discuss if we attempt first to suggest the central preoccupation of all these dramatists, before using two *explications de texte* to examine more intricately their working out.

A. Madness, love and illusion

The representation of madness on the stage, as has been remarked by Van Roosbroeck,[9] among others, is by no means limited to the period under examination in the present chapter. However, it does reach a peak between 1625 and 1635, as his examples show, and stresses almost to exclusion the close connection between madness and love.[10] This is significant, for even in plays where there is no obvious madness, love forms the knot of the intrigue.

This madness has three main characteristics: it leads to a desire for death, it reveals the depth of the victim's attachment to the beloved, it is pleasing to the afflicted:

> Agreables transports! importune raison!

shouts Pyrocle in Mareschal's Cour bergere;[11]

> Je me plais dans l'excés de ma melancolie

says Scudéry's Ligdamon, to which Sylvie replies:

> Ne flattez point son nom, appellez la folie.[12]

These characteristics appear to be basic to the stage description of madness, but they do not by any means define it.

Foucault has noted and given definitions of four distinct types of unreason in the theatre of the period:[13] "la folie par identification romanesque," illustrated by Les Folies de Cardenio, where a character takes himself for a literary type or behaves according to some essentially literary ideal, after the fashion of Don Quijote; "la folie de vaine présomption," as in Les Visionnaires or Le Pédant joué, in which a character believes himself capable of anything (in this category, although he is not specifically indicated by Foucault, must be set the matamore, who, and the association is fascinating, believes himself all-powerful first in war, and second, in love); "la folie de juste châtiment," where we find Mélite with Eraste's confession of guilt in his madness; and finally, "la passion désespérée," which may be illustrated in the French theatre of this period by Rotrou's Hypocondriaque, or by the mad lover, Liridas, in de la Croix's Climène. What is common to all these "types" of madness is their creativity: whatever its cause, whatever its precise manner, madness creates a completely new world, a world which, in itself, is perfectly logical and admirably well ordered.[14] This is interesting, for as we shall see when we discuss Monléon's Amphytrite, the premise from which the madman builds his world is not seldom the same premise as that upon which the supposedly sane person founds his, which may become a device enabling the author to confuse the audience as to where, if anywhere, lies reality as they understand it.

Now the possible significance of madness in the theatre becomes more clear: as the other characters accept or refute this world, as this world contradicts or adapts itself to the visual world of the stage -- or even changes it -- so the spectator's affective response will fluctuate. Illusion replaces illusion, and, in this theatre, will be undone again to return the spectator, not to the first illusion whose fragility is now apparent, but to reality. Foucault has remarked on the essential lightheartedness of stage madness during this period. The tragic madness of an Ophelia or a Lear, of a Saül[15] or a Tiribaze,[16] can no longer have any place here, for they are real and the victim dies as a result of his folly: reality is not called into question by this madness, it is simply another facet of a single reality. It may be, as Foucault suggests, that to the Renaissance mind the madman is in a privileged position between life and death; but this position lies in a single line of reality encompassing both these extremes. This situation is quite different from that of the madness portrayed in the other plays we have mentioned. There madness is a parallel to "reality," which ostensibly puts it in doubt -- but to the spectator this doubt works in both directions. Of this changed attitude towards madness, Foucault has noted:

> Sa fonction dramatique ne subsiste que dans la mesure où il s'agit d'un faux drame: forme chimérique où il n'est question que de fautes supposées, de meurtres illusoires, de disparitions promises aux retrouvailles.
>
> Et pourtant cette absence du sérieux ne l'empêche pas d'être essentielle - plus essentielle encore qu'elle n'était, car si elle met un comble à l'illusion, c'est à partir d'elle que l'illusion se défait.[17]

It is not simply a question of Eraste talking in his madness and revealing all his plotting to those affected by it, nor of the use of madness by the two lovers, Alfrède and Luciane, in Beys' L'Ospital des fous, in order to cheat those who would separate them or as a means to communicate without arousing suspicion. These are destructions of illusion that leave the spectator still within the essential illusion of the theatre: it has been rocked, but continues to bewitch. This is the case also with L'Hypocondriaque, with La Bague de l'oubly, which similarly represents a kind of madness, and, indeed, with the majority of plays: the spectator's distance fluctuates, it is not destroyed. In a few plays, however, the illusion destroyed returns the spectator to a reality of which the stage is but an equal part with the auditorium. There the theatre is specifically revealed as an illusion: the two Comédies des comédiens of Gougenot and Scudéry, Corneille's Illusion comique, to a degree l'Ospital des fous (for different reasons than those suggested above), because the actors are presented as themselves: they appear simultaneously as the spectator's equal and as an illusion. Monléon's

Amphytrite is a special case, destroying -- or using -- illusion in a way common to many others, but to so uncommon a degree that it has a similar effect to that of the other plays just mentioned. In a sense, the spectator is made to look on the roles in these last plays much as, in the others, the sane characters are obliged to regard the madmen, all of whom, to the spectator, are simply at a further degree of illusion. Thus madness becomes just another way of further confusing the illusion. It may be funny or pitiful, but primarily it serves as a foil to the supposed reality of the other characters, whom it puts in doubt because the madman on the stage is the equal of the other characters: to the spectator he is no more nor less illusory than the rest; it is only they who remove themselves from him, we cannot, for he is up there with them. Moreover, it is not rare for them to accept his madness for one reason or another. Cliton, mistaken for Charon by the mad Eraste, gives up his attempts to persuade him to the contrary and carries him off as though he were indeed the boatman of the underworld (Mélite, IV.6). Certainly, this is farce, but behind the laughter lies Cliton's acceptance, for whatever reasons and however briefly, of the second illusion. In Mairet's Illustre corsaire, Lepante, prince of Sicily, and Tenare, one of his officers, play at madmen in order to gain access to the former's love, Ismenie, whom the prince has not seen for ten years and who is now betrothed to the evil Lypas. This madness becomes confusing, for Tenare plays at loving one of Ismenie's maids-of-honour, Célie, who seems to return his love: but we never know whether the love of Tenare is real or not, whether Célie accepts his "illusion," or he hers. We do not know just when the "play within the play" rejoins the outer illusion, for here, too, the second illusion has been accepted.

In this instance the situation is yet more complicated, for love, as we have mentioned, is itself a form of madness, and we are treated to the lively picture of Lepante playing a highly romantic love-lorn prince (which he actually is as Lepante) under the madman's name of Nicas, the shepherd/prince consecrated by countless plays and novels: and he is deliberately presented as playing a rôle (II.5), for which he needs props and a special king's costume. There is a dual commentary: on his supposed reality as the prince, Lepante, mocked by the mad illusion of himself as Nicas, and on the stage character of the shepherd/prince in general. The original stage illusion has been replaced by a game of multiple illusions, and it would seem that this game is of importance, not the story. In Rotrou's Hypocondriaque, Cloridan goes mad upon hearing of the "death" of his beloved Perside (III.2) and is cured after seeing two men rise from their graves to the strains of some music supplied for the occasion and after being shot at by one of the "dead" men in resentment at being brought back to life because of him (V.6). His illusion is shown to be false by having others enter it: again, however briefly, illusion is shown as such. Yet another example is that of Mareschal's Le Railleur (1636):[18] La Dupré, replying to a remark made by Clarimand concerning "un vain Capitain," wonders:

> Est-ce un de ceux qu'on doit jouer à ces jours gras?
> Rodomont, Scanderberg, Fracasse, où Taillebras?
> (II.2. 163)

It happens that Taillebras, the last of those mentioned, has not only already been on stage, but is to reappear in the very next scene. La

Dupré speaks of him (and, by analogy, of the equally pretentious and vain poet, De Lyzante, who is always vying with Taillebras in braggadocio) as though he were to her a stage character, although he appears in the play apparently at the same level of illusion. Thus there is a confusion of levels: momentarily at this point La Dupré steps figuratively into the auditorium. Yet she, too, in her turn is held up to ridicule as a grotesque puppet by Clarimand, the railleur, and his loved-one, Clytie, as are the other characters in the play. Indeed, Clarimand presents himself as a disinterested spectator:

> Tu scais que mon humeur est de rire en tous lieux
> Que je voy du faux or aux idoles des Dieux. (II.2. 163)

and he puts himself at the level of the spectator in the auditorium by making mocking asides (e.g., throughout I.2). If he is finally made captive of the very madness which he has mocked in the others, if he is finally "trapped" into a marriage he was actually not unwilling to make, it is because the illusion plays a trick on him: he is obliged to marry by that most conventional of stage devices, the false letter (Clarimand actually signs a marriage contract unawares [V.1]). Mareschal, however, makes sure that the spectator is no dupe, and adds as the closing line of his play, a comment on Taillebras' marriage:

> Son mariage icy, quoiqu'il fasse et qu'il die,
> Viendra comme la farce après la comédie. (V.6. 206)

So finally the spectator is made aware, beyond the fantastic madness of Taillebras and De Lyzante, beyond the less obvious folly of La Dupré, Beaurocher, and the rest (and let us note, in passing, the similarity of these names to those actually taken by actors), of the illusory nature of Clarimand himself. Each moves from one level of illusion to another, and, in so doing, casts doubt successively on each level, so that finally the spectator has nothing to grasp. We should not forget, either, that costumes, if often expensive, were nonetheless contemporary; so that if a character deliberately stands aside from the others and from the set in which they play in order to mock them, he becomes not very different from the other spectators: particularly at a time when spectators were in any case seated on the stage. Thus Clarimand, who was a spectator, gives the impression of being slowly absorbed into the illusion.

It is not difficult to see that the stage representation of madness leads, of itself and without necessary effort on the part of either author or actor, to an implicit questioning of the nature of reality, made all the more vivid by the stage setting in which the question is posed. However full this theatre may be of types of madman: the fantastic matamore, the equally preposterous poet, the mad lover and so on, the most significant aspect of this portrayal of diverse follies is that it becomes the mirror of the human condition: says Foucault,

> Ce monde du début du XVIIe. siècle est étrangement hospitalier à la folie. Elle est là, au coeur des choses et des hommes, signe ironique qui brouille les repères du vrai et du chimérique, gardant à peine le souvenir des grandes menaces tragiques - vie plus trouble qu'inquiétude, agitation dérisoire dans la société, mobilité de la raison.[19]

It is because of this loss of grandeur, this lack of the gravity that had once accompanied it, that madness, instead of offering an ever-present reminder of the supernatural and of the abnormal, of another realm of life, which contrasted with the normal and natural, becomes merrier and closer: so much so that it blurs those very "realities" which had just recently represented the norm. Madness has not lost its importance as a symbol, it has simply changed its significance. As Foucault tracks its course, madness is at this moment half-way between its Renaissance position as some form of reality beyond normally accepted reality, and its later seventeenth century position inside "reality" but isolated from it, walled off for fear of some kind of contamination which would throw doubt upon "normal" perception:

> Le classicisme éprouve une pudeur devant l'inhumain que la Renaissance jamais n'avait ressentie.[20]

The Renaissance spirit seems to subsist in the dramatic literature of the period with which we are concerned. We may suppose that just as the attitude of the other characters toward the madman is one of pity and a desire to help, mixed with gentle mockery -- and, very occasionally, a light fear[21] -- so too is the attitude of the spectator one of light pity and laughter, rather than of fright. These characters arouse a certain excitement, they confuse, they pull the spectator into the illusion only to present him with another. They are far from arousing that terror with which the spectator will later regard a Cléopatre (of Corneille's Rodogune), a Phèdre or a Néron, and which will also cause a later morality to call for the exclusion or punishment of the offender. With the possible exception of Eraste in Mélite, there is no offense in these madmen of a generation earlier. Far from it: they have become a necessary part of a single but very blurred reality.

From a theatrical point of view, they are a means of provoking the spectator to an awareness of this lack of clarity; and this provocation far exceeds the mere representation of madness, as it is easy to see: it permeates plot and character. For among all the forms of madness shown on the stage, the most common is the passion of love.

To the seventeenth century mind, indeed, love was not simply madness by a metaphor, as it usually is today. It was a form of madness similar, at least in its causes, to hypochondria, the result of hot humours rising to the brain, and not far removed in its appearance from melancholia.[22] Thus the very core of these plays, their being fashioned around some lovers' intrigue, their characters who exist only for love, their amorous language, is already the precarious reality of a madness. And this is a madness which still hangs on to its links with death in the midst of life, and which thereby questions not only our perceptions and our reliance upon them, but the very nature of life itself. Love disturbs the mind, it gives the lover the desire to change his nature, to lose himself in the loved-one and thus to deny his own reality. It may confuse his reason so much that his perceptions move, as it were, to another level. Finally, it leads him towards death: if his love is accepted, the two souls become one and he changes his essential being, if it is refused he has lost his soul without possibility of recovering it, and will die:

> Si tost que ie le vy, ie perdy ma franchise;
> Mon sang fut tout esmeu, mon ame en fut esprise;
> Ie me perdis moy-mesme, & voulant l'acquérir,
> Ie fus ingenieuse a me faire mourir. (Gombauld, l'
> Amaranthe [1630], I.
> 5. p. 28 -- Aronte)

So love itself appears as the symbol of the problem the playwright faces, for while it leads to death, while it completely alters and intensifies the perceptions, at the same time it leads to life. The lovers are surrounded by the warmth of the sun, by the chattering of birds, the rushing of streams; appreciation of the growing trees and flowers around him is a standard part of the lover's repertory in the pastoral. At the same time, this life is not a "normal" one: the true lover is only able to enjoy it to the full if his beloved has accepted his love as a part of her own being: he presents her with his soul (and vice versa) so that there may be some kind of fusion between them: Argenis says to Poliarque as he is about to leave:

Helas! ie suis sans vous la moitié de moy-mesme,

but he tells her not to be afraid, he will return from France in three months with a fleet: he cannot stay away without Argenis, for, he asks,

Que feroient mes subiets d'un monarque sans ame,
Et qui la laisse icy pour gage de sa flame.
(Du Ryer, Argenis. Derniere iournée,
III.6. pp. 115, 121

Says Arimand, separated from Chryséide:

Ie ne suis desormais qu'vn pauure corps sans ame
Ie ne suis desormais que l'ombre d'vn viuant,
Qu'vn fantosme qui parle et qu'vn tombeau mouuant.
(Mairet, Chryséide et Arimand, I.2.
ll. 206-208)

And it is this fusion, this "death," that the lover welcomes: soliloquizes Thisbé of Pyrame:

Mon ame, qu'ay-je dit? c'est fort mal disourir,
Car l'ame nous fait vivre et tu me fais mourir.
Il est vray que la mort que ton ame me livre
Est aussi seulement ce que j'appelle vivre.
(Théophile, Pyrame et Thisbé,
I.1.p.95)[23]

Now this loss of the self is scarcely different from that doubt which is a central question in, for example, the work of Rotrou, and which is often inspired by some quite different cause, although love is always somewhere behind it. In L'Hypocondriaque, Cloridan comes from his madness doubting his reality:

Vos soins injurieux m'ont réduit à ce point
D'ignorer si je vis ou si je ne vis point. (V.6. 90)

The King of *La Bague de l'oubly* sinks into ever deeper madness as a result of the magic spell contained in the ring:

> Au pitoyable état où mes jours sont réduits
> Je n'ose m'assurer si moi-meme je suis (IV.2. 145)

Amphitryon, faced with the somewhat unusual problem of an exact double, loses touch with his own reality:

> Je ne me connais plus; moi-même je m'ignore
> (*Les Sosies*, II.3. 106)

Indeed, both in this play and in *Hercule mourant*, the problem of identity and the throwing into doubt of accepted reality become quite transparent preoccupations of the playwright.[24] However, in the general output of the period, it is the lover who provokes this doubt. The lover of this theatre already occupies a different reality from that of the spectator, for he exists in the literary world of the pastoral. He is, in a sense, brought nearer to the spectator by appearing on stage, for his unreality is thus invested with a certain air of reality; sufficient at least to pull the spectator into the "jeu des illusions."

B. Two examples: Monléon's "*Amphytrite*" and Scudéry's "*Ligdamon et Lidias*"[25]

Monléon's mythological fantasy is ushered in by the goddess of the title as she languishes after the sleeping Sun, who is foiling her desires by dreaming only of a certain Clytie. Amphytrite complains of the god's indifference and of the strength of her own love:

> Pourquoy l'ay-je troublé, son repos est le mien,
> Ie n'ay point de plaisir qui ne vienne du sien,
> Et ceste passion est tellement extreme
> Que je vis dedans luy plus que dedans moy-mesme. (I.1.,p. 5)

The conventional effect of love is thus brought in immediately: as the personality is lost and becomes confused with that of the other. Since this question is of primary importance, we may note here also, that this blurring of identity through love has implications similar to those created by the representation of doubles (upon which *Ligdamon et Lidias* is centred, as also *Les Sosies* and *Les Menèchmes*) and by the extensive use of disguises (as in Rotrou's *Filandre*, *la Pelerine amoureuse*, Du Ryer's *Argénis et Poliarque*, *Les Vendanges de Suresne*, Mairet's *Sylvie*, *l'Illustre corsaire*, and a host of others). In Monléon's play, for the present, the confusion remains more at the level of conventional poetic metaphor: and Amphytrite makes the most of her opportunity to lengthen that metaphor. This is important, however, for language is a major element of the confusion to which this madness leads, and, in this play, it is when the language gets out of hand that it upsets the "dialectic balance," as it were, and causes the whole elaborate fabric of appearance to collapse: but it is the language, first and foremost, that creates this appearance.

The Sun finally wakes up, and prepares to leave on the daily round, as Amphytrite complains that his assiduity has nothing to do with his eagerness to do his duty, but rather with his desire to be with a certain beauty:

> L'Amour le plus puissant s'affoiblit par l'absence,
> Et pour l'entretenir tu luy dois ta presence,
> Affin que l'vnion de vos diuins accors
> Passe de l'vn en l'autre, & n'informe qu'vn corps [. . .]
> (I.2. p. 9)

In the eyes of the beloved, the essence of the lover is to be found. The sun's essence is his light and heat, and Monléon is able to make much of the confusion possible between the "fires" of the sun and those of love. The sun's response to Amphytrite when she protests that her presence is worth that of Clytie -- or rather, when she asks whether he believes Clytie to be worth more than her, plays on this confusion:

> Non, mais dans ces beaux yeux, pour que ie meurs d'amour,
> Je treuue tous les feux dont i'allume le iour.
> (I.2. p. 10)

This comment will be held against him later by Amphytrite after the sun has been disappointed with regard to Clytie and comes to beg the sea goddess to love him, asking if she does not see the love in his eyes. Amphytrite then retorts:

> Clitie est dans tes yeux, on y voit ses appas. (I.4. p. 24)

However, this only comes later, for the moment it is she herself who is begging that the sun take his fires from her:

> Ah! si tu veus bien tost le mettre tout en flame,
> Prens seulement les feux qui consomment mon ame.
> (I.2. p. 10)

It is a game, a kind of salon preciosity, played out by the gods seated in the Blue room: the flame of love, the dart of the eyes, the flames of the day, and thus a life-giving flame. Yet, the life it gives is a precarious one: with Amphytrite's love, the sun, she says, could consume the world. Nor is this all, if he accepted her love, the sun remarks:

> On verroit cét essay causer trop de malheurs (I.2. p. 10),

for not only would this cause the grief of Clytie and of himself, but she is a water goddess, while he is of fire. Either way is death: if Amphytrite's version is accepted, the earth will be burned up; if the sun's, then he will be extinguished. There is a confusion here, typical of the language of these plays, between the metaphor and the concrete effects supposed to result from the metaphor and which, in the mind of the speaker, cause that metaphor to be forgotten and become the very love itself of which it was originally but a symbol: the spectator is presented visually with the result of this confusion at the end of the play, as we shall later see. In the meantime, Amphytrite goes off on another tack, suggesting that her waters will protect Clytie from the rays of the sun, fearful as they will be when inspired by her, Amphytrite's, love (a suggestion of suicide in the sea, which will recur):

> Tu te pourras servir de l'onde de mes pleurs,
> Affin de guarantir de mes feux ta Princesse,
> Et puis tu m'aduoüeras qu'il faut estre Déesse
> Pour ne consommer pas à la flame des Dieux.
> Et que seule ie puis souspirer pour tes yeux. (I.2. p. 10)

Now she seems to imply that equality in love is a first necessity. This causes the sun to return to his earlier protestations: for if the couple in love become a single being, an external equality is of no consequence. The being created by love exists at a level whose connections with the social order are exactly nil. If the two beings become fused, as it were, into this unique being, there can be no question of the kind of relationship supposed here by Amphytrite, which presupposes a certain distance between them. It is above all a question of a certain unity: says the sun,

> Tout cede à mon amour comme vne autre elle mesme,
> Ie haïs ce qu'elle haït, pour aimer ce qu'elle aime,
> Ie fuy ce qu'elle fuit, & l'amoureux tourment
> En toute heure, en tout temps, nous touche égallement,
> Et cét astre des coeurs partageant ma puissance,
> A tout (ainsy que moy) peut faire resistance. (I.2. pp. 10-11)

Amphytrite, however, refuses this notion of the unifying nature of love, and emphasizes her idea of equality:

> Ainsi tout son pouuoir n'est autre que le tien,
> Mais moy ie ne scaurois me seruir que du mien,
> C'est en quoy mon amour d'autant plus la surpasse,
> Que s'il luy faut souffrir tu te mets en sa place.

A notion which the sun refutes as he did before: the power of each individual has nothing to do with the force of the couple in love:

> De deux tourments vnis l'excez en est plus fort. (I.2. p. 11)

Amphytrite is obliged to adopt a position contrary to her own opinions concerning the fusion of the lovers' souls. She knows this fusion makes nonsense of social position, but this position is her only trump, albeit a useless one. The "égarement amoureux" is based on an opposition reason/emotion, and the first has to surrender to the last. Once the emotional premise has been accepted, reason becomes in vain: Amphytrite accepts the notion of fusion, she is only disputing the couple involved: something which is at present beyond her power to alter.

The whole discussion here becomes very much the salon convention, and the spectator of the play is constrained to follow a pattern of language totally devoid of all attempts to involve him: he may admire its intricacy and follow its patterns, but his emotions remain quite unmoved as far as the characters are concerned.

However, we are before a play, not a salon discussion, and we have, therefore, other aspects to attract the attention. As the two immortals leave the stage, Leandre enters to comment on the sun's beauty and to suggest it must be the result of some love (a comment which is a direct appeal to the audience, to their assent -- and thus a certain kind of intellectual involvement at this point). All the world, comments Leandre, seems to be in love:

Aussi vid-on jamais sur le sein de Cybelle
Vn feu plus admirable, vne clarté plus belle
Que celle que lon void ranimer tous les corps
Que le somme auoit mis, comme au nombre des morts,
Sur le bord émaillé de ces claires fontaines,
Quand vous chassez la nuict, Iris chasse ses peines,
Et les Nymphes autour de leurs sacrez ruisseaux,
Pour gouster ces douceurs abandonnent leur [sic] eaux;
Zephire les courtise, & Flore plus contente,
De mille objects charmans rauit leur veuë errante,
Et pour les obliger d'vn plus noble dessain,
Auecque son haleine il découure leur sein [. . .]
(I.3. pp. 13-14)

This passage, indeed the entire scene from which it comes, is wholly dependent on visual effects to complete it. In fact, it seems to go further than merely complimentary elements, as we have already seen.[26] It is out of the scenery which surrounds the characters that their subsequent conversation arises, and without it would be quite meaningless. With love, says Leandre, all awakes, beauty comes alive and hints of death are dispelled (this, as we shall see later, is a rash supposition). Here we are in the middle of L'Astrée, the Bucolics, a hundred pastorals. Even the trees and boughs, "soubs qui l'esprit soupire/D'vn amant transformé," seem to laugh, thinking perhaps that a general amnesty will metamorphose them back into their original shapes. After Sylvie enters the conversation gets increasingly precious, its images appearing as fragile as the water reflection of which it speaks. Here is a language which transforms itself at whim, and subject to the abrupt intrusion of reality or another fantasy, just as is the whole idyll itself, which seems to be taking on one shape, but whose whole character will be changed as Amphytrite tries to impose her desires upon it:

Syluie: Berger, quel beau dessein, ou quelle inquiétude
Accompagne vos pas dans ceste solitude.

Leandre: Le mesme qui peut estre a promis à vos yeux,
De leur faire treuuer vn miracle en ces lieux.
Syluie: Il s'en est acquitté, puis que je vous rencontre.
Leandre: Seroit-ce en ce cristal, où vostre object nous monstre
Tout ce que la nature, & tout ce que les Dieux
Ont pu faire de beau, de parfaict, ou de mieux.
Syluie: Ouy, s'y representant vostre Image en son onde,
Il montroit dans son sein tout l'abregé du monde.
Leandre: Mais plutost, s'y formant, vostre rare tableau,
Il faisoit sous vos trais paroistre Amour plus beau.

The entirely visual nature of this imagery, just as in the discussion between Amphytrite and the sun, reflects, perhaps, its dependence on a visual stage setting surrounding the protagonists, and from which they, like the spectator, take their cue. Indeed, many of these plays appear constructed more with a certain scenery in mind than with any particular desire to relate or show a particularly convincing story. This play of Monléon's is especially inclined toward the visual, but as such it is very far from being an exception.

Having abruptly switched from the immortal pair to the mortals, we now return just as abruptly to the first. The sun returns, preparing to plunge into the sea; his love has changed its course, and he now loves Amphytrite whom he previously scorned:

> Ie vay chercher ma vie, au milieu de ma mort (I.4. p. 17)

He is proud of having changed his target:

> Douce captiuité, changement glorieux,
> Qui me tirez de terre & m'esleuez aux Cieux.
> Aux Cieux, que c'est mal dit, vne erreur sans seconde
> Me fait prendre le Ciel pour le sejour de l'onde,
> Puisque dedans les Cieux ie ne fais que courir,
> Et que l'eau m'arrestant me fait viure & mourir,
> Viure pour adorer les appas de ma belle,
> Et mourir dedans moy pour mieux reuiure en elle;
> Donnant à mes desirs ce doux contentement,
> Que ie vis pour aymer, & ie meurs en aymant. (I.4. pp. 17-18)

Language becomes now a plaything. Just as we have seen with Sylvie and

Leandre, it builds up its own worlds, and, at the same time, it creates its own emotions. The sun's love is situated, not in reality, but in this language of fantasy, whose object could, in fact, be anyone. It is in the figures of language rather than in the heart that love is to be found. Thus, following the idea of his love which bears him off to the heavens, by its new divine target as well as by the uplifting of his emotions, the sun stops abruptly (and quite humorously, let it be said) as he realizes that his new love obliges him to descend towards the sea where he will find Amphytrite, and where, in the normal course of his circuit, he must in any case spend the night. The idea, already brought up, of a simultaneous life and death, which originally concerned the death of the day and his life in love, now changes direction slightly to return to the ideas expressed at the beginning of the play: of the fusion of the souls of the lovers: life will become a perpetual adoration of the beloved, death will be merely the sinking of the self into the other -- to find a new life. The language seems to follow a motion which, in the long run, is circular, but which winds along all kinds of paths, which leaps about, which creates its own obstacles at the will, or rather, the whim, of the person using it. It never reaches or discloses any certain reality; the listener only perceives the reality that a given character chooses to entertain at a certain moment. The only thing that is permanent here is the language itself. This leads not seldom to what appear as quite absurd images, as when, pursuing the idea that Jupiter wished to make of Amphytrite another world, he sees her as differing from the original only in that she has more than one sun:

> Mais qui peut auiourd'huy, me tenant en seruage,
> En auoir vn au sein, & deux dans le visage. (I.4. p. 18)

This is only absurd, however, if we link it to some known reality; with this reality left behind and ignored, the image becomes all-important, and it is these images the spectator must follow, not any reference outside the language. Thus, as Amphytrite enters again, she is dwelling on the same notion as the sun. Rather, she is using the same images, and the ambiguity is made deeper. She has overcome her love for the sun; his refusal to love her has been sufficient to remove her love for him: the torments have disappeared:

> Cet astre qui les fit naistre dedans mon ame,
> Les a jusqu'au cercueil conduit avec sa flame. (I.4. p. 18)

Thus, neither the god of love nor the sun "ont plus d'empire" over her heart:

> Ces Dieux dedans mon coeur ont treuué leur tombeau.

She, of course, understands the word "tombeau" here in a quite different sense from that of the sun: for him, it was the opportunity for rebirth in love; for her, it means precisely the opposite. To the listener, the ambiguity of the metaphor must have been quite striking.

As we see, the spectator must be continually on the alert if he is not to miss any of these little subtleties of the precious author. It is clear that there is no intention on the part of the playwright to push the spectator into the stage movement so as to identify with the emotions of characters: they have no identifiable emotions, the language is far too intricate for that. But this is not where the interest lies. The spectator must rather follow intellectually the spirit of the language whose intricacies here contain most of the play's interest. This is not to suggest, of course, that the play would be the same if it were read, and that it was not worth performing: the fact is that these plays were performed. Moreover, the set often demands an equal effort on the part of the spectator.

We have, to my knowledge, no specific reference to the staging of this play, beside the directions that are in the printed text, but see, for example, how bitterly d'Aubignac complains about the effort of imagination needed by the spectator of Pyrame et Thisbé, for, when the two lovers converse, they do so through a crack in a wall which stretches from the back of the stage towards the front:

> Car outre que les deux espaces qui estoient deçà et delà ce faux-mur, representoient les deux chambres de Thisbé et de Pyrame, et qu'il estoit contre toute apparence de raison, qu'en ce méme lieu le Roy vint parler à ses Confidens, et moins encore qu'une Lyonne y vint faire peur à Thisbé, je demanderois volontiers, par quel moyen supposé dans la verité de l'action, cette muraille devenoit visible et invisible? par quel enchantement elle empéchoit ces deux Amans de se voir et n'empéchoit pas les autres?[27]

The spectator is forced to use his imagination as regards both the scenery and the language: the text and the stage decor together make sure that the spectator will always be fully aware that he is before a stage, that he is watching an "illusion" (we must use the term for ease of comprehension, but since there is no real illusion, it is somewhat of a misnomer). The situation is not quite so simple, however: the spectator is quite likely to identify with a character in spite of all this; from time to time at least. A second quotation from d'Aubignac will show us this effect: speaking again of Pyrame et Thisbé, he makes the remark we have already seen (above, Chapter I, p. 15) about the death of Pyrame, which comes after a long speech criticized by the good abbé:

> [. . .] et j'ay veu dans cette occasion une jeune fille qui n'avoit encore jamais esté à la Comédie, dire à sa Mere, Qu'il falloit l'avertir que sa Maistresse n'estoit pas morte; tant il est vray que ce moment portoit les Spectateurs dans les interests de ce Personnage![28]

D'Aubignac is complaining that such an effect is not true all the time in this theatre. Is it not precisely with this fact in mind that we should attempt to characterize this theatre? This "fluctuation" of the spectator's mind, which we may call "theatrical distancing," which blurs the frontier between the real and the illusory, corresponds to the principal theme of the theatre of the period, and which reveals itself through the superficial themes of love, of madness, through the ambiguous use of language. The theatre on the theatre, the impromptus of Scudéry and Gougenot, only do the same thing in a different manner. Already, with Mairet's Sophonisbe (1634) we find the beginnings of a completely new theatre, which will not be accepted fully by the public until considerably later, a theatre which was no less experimental than was Gordon Craig's, or Antoine's or Beckett's in our own time. The very fact that this "neo-classical" theatre took so long to become generally accepted (which does not imply, of course, that the other disappeared immediately) seems to be evidence that the public felt the difference between the two theatres. Scudéry, for example, in the preface to Andromire, whose privilege is dated "3 mai 1641," this same Scudéry who, in 1637, had fought so vigorously against Le Cid for its supposed infractions of the rules, bienséances and language of the theatre, is able, equally vigorously, to defend his ideal of the tragi-comic (as he had in 1631 in the preface to Ligdamon et Lidias) because "dans chaque Scène, [elle] monstre quelquechose de nouueau," because it reaches its end "par cent moyens surprenans," and because it contains a "grand nombre de figures." It is possible that he is quite simply defending the type of play whose writing he finds the most simple, but he supports his plea with a more convincing argument:

> C'est vne chose que le sentiment public a determinée, et que nostre plaisir particulier, nous a fait connoistre a tous par experience.

Thus both d'Aubignac in 1657 (although La Pratique was already under way in 1640) and Scudéry in 1641 give evidence that a theatre which denies illusion, a theatre which makes no effort to convince the spectator of the reality of its characters, not only existed, but was popular.

The chief concern of this theatre is external reality first, perhaps a spiritual one second; thus its confusions are dependent on the appearances of the theatrical production. Characters recognize one another by appearance alone, and are moved only by appearance: how many of these lovers fall in love first and foremost with a picture?[29] Like the spectator in the auditorium, they are moved first by the sight:

> Mais, o Dieux! je la vois, & ces rares beautez
> Suspendent mes esprits, qu'elles ont enchantez. (I.4. p. 20)

exclaims the sun as he sees Amphytrite again. The goddess, however, succeeds in escaping from him. As she approaches Leandre in the wood, she feels herself being consumed. She can see no one, but she feels her soul being destroyed by love as she hears a voice. Fearing it may be the sun who is still pursuing her, she complains, but is powerless; even if it is he, as she thinks, she is constrained to love him:

> Je le pense, & ses yeux plains d'amoureuse flame
> Me bruslent dans le coeur, & consomment mon ame,
> Leurs raiz malgré la nuict du plus sombre sejour
> Font éclatter par tout le charme de leur jour,
> Mes yeux en sont frappez, & ma veuë insensée
> En donne le portrais à ceux de ma pensée. (I.5. p. 28)

It turns out, however, that she is wrong this time: it is the shepherd, Léandre, who is the cause of these flames. He, in turn, falls in love with her, and, forgetful of Sylvie, pines after Amphytrite who leaves him with the promise of a meeting soon. He takes on the colours of a Hylas, that Protean lover, epitome of inconstancy. The sun changes, Léandre changes, Ligdamon and Lidias are confused, Cardenio goes mad, heroes deceive, disguise, mislead; these are the characters matched by the glittering language: the spectator is drawn into this vortex of confusion and blurred perception. As if to make certain we are aware of this, Monléon now brings on the sun disguised as a shepherd (II.1. pp. 32-34).

This blurring goes further, for if reality follows language, it is clear that the appearance which allows us to grasp a reality is subject to the same changes as the language which translates it. Amphytrite says of Léandre:

> Ie ne suis plus à moy, son oeil est mon vainqueur
> (II.2. p. 36)

For love, above all, can be based only on beauty; and beauty is visible. The eye can deceive, however. The sun is disappointed in Clytie; Léandre, as we shall see, at one moment apparently living, can become a rock the next. When Neptune comes to woo Amphytrite, having been made to fall in love with her by Love himself (who also fell in love with her upon seeing her asleep), the sea god remarks on her beauty. Replies

Amphytrite:

> Souuentesfois nos yeux promettent des rigueurs,
> Lors qu'vn calme & la paix logent dedans nos coeurs;
> Et telle a sur son front les traits d'vne Cythere,
> Qui porte dans son sein l'horreur d'vne Megere,
> Tellement qu'on ne peut auec iuste raison
> Croire aux appas flatteurs de ceste trahison.
> Le charme nous deçoit & sous vn beau visage,
> Couure le plus souuent vn perfide courage. (II.3. p. 41)

Appearance, then, is likely to mislead both as to its own surface, and as to what lies beneath: this is repeated visually here in the scene when Léandre becomes a rock. In our second example, Ligdamon and Amerine are believed dead, when they are actually only under the effects of a cunning potion.

As the play goes on, Neptune begs Thetis and Oceanus for their daughter's hand, but, given no contentment, is angered and begins to stir up storms. In the meantime, Léandre has been bewailing his lot, and the difficulty for humans to understand:

> Quiconque peint l'Amour sans des confusions,
> Peut bien paindre la nuict sans des illusions,
> La rage dans transport, sans tumulte la guerre
> (III.2. p. 62)

He sleeps, and during his sleep "Vne Nymphe montre la moitié du corps qui sort de l'écorce d'vn laurier" (stage direction, III.2. p. 64), and she tells him he will conquer Amphytrite, but that his love will be quenched in the sea. He awakes in anger and goes straightway into stances. Here are two important distancing devices: the completely unreal visual device of the nymph coming from a tree, which is the exteriorizing of a literary convention, and the use of stances, a stage convention much criticized by the later classical critics precisely because of its lack of realism.

Meanwhile the gods are meeting to decide what to do about the storms being stirred up by Neptune, which are threatening to engulf the entire earth. There is thus an "assemblée des Dieux" (stage direction, III.5. pp. 81-88), which presumably takes place on the upper stage, which according to Mme. Deierkauf-Holsboer, was to be found above the main stage.[30] Once again there is no attempt to offer realism: quite apart from the fact of the action involving the gods in the first place. Once again, the artificial nature of the performance is brought home to the spectator.

The gods decide to resolve the problem by driving Léandre mad, causing him to attempt to kill himself; at which point they will transform him into "quelque arbre, ou [. . .] quelque rocher" (III.5. p. 87). This desire of the gods is fulfilled, and in front of Sylvie, who comes in search of Léandre in the hope that if she tells him of her love, he will love her. Seeing the shepherd come, apparently grief-stricken, she decides to hide in order to overhear him. The spectator is now treated to a very long discourse by Léandre, interspersed by comments aside from Sylvie, which he, naturally, does not hear. So Sylvie adopts the position of a spectator, commenting to the auditorium throughout Léandre's madness, and thus involving the audience closely in the first, her, level of illusion, but as it is placed before another, stronger, illusion: that of madness. First, Léandre decides to overcome this unreasonable love he has for a goddess, but he realizes it is impossible for him to do so; gradually he becomes mad:

> [. . .] une morne tristesse,
> L'attaque [his mind] en sa douleur, le menasse, le presse,
> L'horreur auec l'object de ses images faux,

> Luy liure incessamment des funestes assauts,
> Mes yeux sont éblouys, mon ouye est perduë,
> Mes sentimens estaints, ma raison suspenduë,
> Et je ne reçois plus que les illusions,
> Qu'vn sang plain de vapeurs forme en des visions,
> Mon jugement troublé ne conçoit que chimeres,
> Que fantosmes hideux, que larmes [sic], que Megeres,
> L'air ne souffle pour moy que des contagions,
> L'enfer a deschainé toutes ses legions,
> Vn esprit plain de feux, de flames & de souffre,
> M'accompagne par tout, le ciel veut que je souffre,
> Les Dieux l'ont arresté, l'imagination
> Me fait voir leurs tourments, & ma punition
> Vn gouffre empuanty de poix & de bithume,
> Où la peste nourrit le charbon qui l'alume,
> Parmy l'infection d'vn funeste élement,
> Où la mort sans mourir meurt éternellement,
> Où le mal desespere, où la fureur enrage
> [. . .] (IV.2. pp. 98-99)

The madman has followed an admirable logic up to the point where he decides the only solution is death, starting from a first assumption based on some image in his mind from which the remainder follows without hesitation. This logic is that pointed out by Foucault (see above, p. 93 and n.14) as the already well-documented path followed by melancholia. So Léandre, starting from the first assumption of the possibility and the fact of his loving a goddess, continues thus: "the gods are far above the level of humans and I am therefore guilty of the most arrant _hubris_ in loving Amphytrite. On the other hand, if I refuse her love, which she has already offered to me, I am again guilty of withstanding the will of the gods: which is a _hubris_ of no less a magnitude than the first. I have, thus, but one escape: to die."

This is the melancholia in which Sylvie, and the spectator with her, watch him. She, however, accepts the first premise also, for in this world of fantasy there is nothing strange in loving a goddess. What is more, at this point, the spectator has been brought into the fantasy by the association with Sylvie, despite the fact that just before the stage devices had kept him away, and will again immediately afterward: for it is now, as Léandre goes to throw himself into the sea, in the midst of his madness and lament, that he changes into a stone. The language, the madness in which we are momentarily involved takes, as it were, a separate direction from what occurs on stage, until finally Léandre becomes aware that he cannot move his feet. Now the spectator moves away from Sylvie again as she goes over to the rock, thinking first that he has indeed fallen over the cliff, and finally concluding that he has been changed into a rock:

> Quelque demon l'a-il [sic] soustrait à la nature,
> Ou pour trahir mes sens d'vn trait malicieux,
> Supposé ce fantosme à l'object de mes yeux:
> Est ce toy que i'ay veu Leandre, ou bien l'image
> D'un spectre qui paroist dessous ton beau visage,
> Reuiens, qui que tu sois, fusses-tu le trépas,
> Tu me plairas tousiours auecque ses appas,
> Esprit d'illusion [. . .] (IV.2. p. 102)

Yet, as we see, the notion of illusion is far from banished from her mind -- as from the spectator's -- but the rock shifts slightly and "L'esprit de Leandre de dedans le rocher parle à Syluie" (p. 103), telling her to engrave his fate upon the rock. This she does. As he becomes a rock, then, the notion of illusion is put squarely to the spectator by Sylvie (who herself is using it in a different sense), awakening him from his acceptance of Léandre's madness, which he can now see to be an illusion itself, and placing him back even from Sylvie herself, to whom this metamorphosis is perfectly acceptable if not altogether normal. The spectator here has fluctuated between an acceptance of unreason, of madness, which is the illusion of the stage (but which, in this case, was a real madness), and his awareness of it as an illusion. Monléon tends to turn to the spectacular to keep this illusion in mind, as do Scudéry in Le Prince déguisé, Corneille in his Médée, Rotrou in Hercule mourant, Durval in Les Travaux d'Ulysse, Mairet in the last act of Sylvie, and so on. Others (and the same) prefer to disturb the logic of the language, and, by breaking it, bring the falsity to our attention. Monléon, in this play, takes the logic of madness a slight step further, as we shall see.

Amphytrite now discovers the fate of Léandre, and decides she will marry Neptune for the sake of the shepherd, since from the base of the rock a stream runs to the sea:

> Puis que ton beau coulant au sortir de sa source,
> Dans son sein & ses eaux va terminer sa course. (IV.3. p. 114)

The logic here being, of course, that by marrying Neptune she will be marrying a small part of Léandre! As if this bit of humour were insufficient the following scene sees a total devaluation of the role of the gods. Oceanus and Thétis are aghast to learn that Amphytrite loved beneath her station, while Mercury assures them that:

> Des regards ont esté leurs plus grandes faueurs (IV.4. p. 116)

A remark which send Thétis into praise of her good upbringing:

> Ie l'ay tousiours cognuë assez discrette & sage,
> Pour ne permettre rien à son desauantage.

The incongruity of this exchange in the mythological fantasy world created by Monléon is quite comical, and has the same effect as the spectacular: it pushes the spectator away. This device occurs so regularly in the plays of this period that one cannot ascribe it to mere ineptitude on the part of the playwrights: it is a particularly popular device with Rotrou and Corneille (see below, p. 145 ff).

Amphytrite agrees to become "emperiere & maistresse en ce lieu" (p. 118), and she and Neptune go off to the rock where Sylvie is lamenting the fate of her Léandre. Neptune releases the shepherd, and that is the end of the story of the two mortals. It is by no means the end of the play, however; Monléon has saved the real spectacular for the end.

As we see Amphytrite and Neptune finally happy, the sky opens and all the gods appear (p. 136). Neptune and his new empress

> . . . se retirent pour aller receuoir les Dieux dans
> la grotte où se doiuent faire les Nopces.
> (V.2. p. 137 - stage direction)

At the same time "Les Sirenes & les Tritons font vn concert," and the spectator is entertained with what we must assume to be a kind of ballet. The sun now reappears to make the most of his opportunity and of his anger: he decides he will burn up the world: the language of love, the logic of madness of which this love is one form, creates its image. The fires, which were previously a simple metaphor, are made concrete. But even before this, just before, a slighter form of the same device occurs: the two gods are married, and Neptune praises his good fortune which has enabled him to possess "ceste diuinité." Here language, the semi-ironic language of preciosity, has been transformed into its own fantasy: the address to the beloved, the "goddess," is made real instead of a simple hyperbole (V.4. pp. 141-151). This is a mere prelude, however, as cries are heard and they notice that everything seems to be on fire. Thétis cries out,

> Que d'horribles objects espouuantent les yeux,
> On ne voit plus qu'esclairs voller dessous les cieux,
> La terre ouure son sein, & soulageant son ame
> Semble vomir dans l'air mille forests de flame,
> L'onde mesme consomme. (p. 145)

It is remarkable how the play has become a pure spectacle, part of which at least must have been staged,[31] how the fantasy of the language has been made concrete and thus the whole illusion betrayed: for the spectatcular here is evidently artificial. What is more, this revelation is in a kind of epilogue which has little to do with the main action of Amphytrite and Léandre, although it does conclude, in a sense, the action which began the play only to disappear until now. It is almost as though the author wanted to make quite sure that the audience was fully aware of the illusion before they left their places. To underline this, Neptune asks about the reality of these

> [. . .] estranges visions?
> Sont-ce des veritez, ou des illusions? (V.4. p. 151)

The final scene of the play puts us before the sirens and tritons once again, as they lament the horror by which they are surrounded. Everything is confused, cries are heard from suffering humans. "Esprits languissants," "leurs souspirs & leurs plaintes," "la rage du feu," "ces feux" -- the language they use to describe the supposedly real sufferings of humanity, is the precious language of love. It is as though the language had abruptly become visible to the spectator. The irony is now physically present, the spectacle the language seemed to create in the mind has become theatrical spectacle. The spectator has now been completely distanced from the fantasy, for the whole thing is clearly revealed as a stage device. The final irony is that the sun's rage is quenched by a threat, borne by Mercury, that Jupiter will send Iris to put out the sun! We are thus brought full circle, from his original desire to drown himself in the waters of Amphytrite and die in her love, to his escaping from a more literal quenching from the waters of Iris!

Less spectacular, but abounding with many of the same devices, is Scudéry's Ligdamon et Lidias, published in 1631, the year after l'Amphytrite.

Scudéry's play opens, as did the one we have just examined, with the sighs of an unsuccessful lover: here the spectator is presented with the sight of Ligdamon lamenting over his love for Sylvie (I.1. pp. 1-5-9411).. The effect of this beginning, which is fairly standard in this theatre, should not be likened to that of Hardy's long prologues, since here the discourse is kept at a personal level instead of becoming generalized in the form of a commentary on the human condition or as a prayer. Scudéry uses it a great deal in fact: Le Trompeur puny, Le Vassal généreux, which begins with stances, even La Comédie des comédiens. If these introductions do not serve to create an atmosphere of the kind sought by Hardy, they nonetheless set a certain tone to the play: the poet allows himself always to be seen. If this is true of Tristan's La Mariane, for example, how much more true is it of the present play, where Ligdamon's complaint concerning Silvie's indifference takes on the most precious forms:

> C'est moy chetif, c'est moy qui tente l'impossible
> En voulant émouuoir vn rocher insensible;
> Ha! ie l'appelle mal; un rocher se fendroit,
> Si c'estoit vne roche elle me repondroit
> Lors que ie l'entretiens du tourment que i'endure,
> Mais elle est de matiere et plus sourde et plus dure:
> Tout horsmis cet aspic prend part à mes malheurs,
> L'air pour l'amour de moy le matin fond en pleurs,
> L'onde mesme en murmure, et le vent en soupire (p. 2)

Silvie becomes, in turn, all kinds of hardness, and he finally decides to kill himself. But how? He cannot jump, since he has already fallen as far as he can; he cannot drown himself, since he has survived in the midst of so many tears; besides, even the sea could not extinguish the fires that burn within him; for that reason he cannot burn himself: since those which burn inside him have been unable to do the job; he cannot hang himself, since he is already bound as tight as he can be; nor can he die from the bite of a serpent like Cleopatra if the snakes in his heart have insufficient poison. Here, naturally, enters the notion of the madness of love:

> [. . .] l'esprit plein d'vn poison
> Qui m'entrant par les yeux en chasse la raison (p. 4).

He cannot stab himself, since even the arrows of Love have left him alive to languish. He concludes his lament with a conceit related to the commonplace confusion of love, life and death (a confusion coincidentally possible also through the quasi-homonymy of l'amour and la mort):

> Si bien que dans ce mal mon auenture est telle,
> Que pour mourir toujours ma mort est immortelle. (p. 4)

Death seems to take on a life of its own. How wrong is Lancaster to suggest: "Nothing can be more absurd than Ligdamon's monologue in which he is seeking a means of committing suicide" (History, I.2., 474-475)! It is precisely in this language that lies the interest of the play; more, it is the language that creates the play. Ligdamon's toying with the idea of suicide leads him into the confusion of life and death. Language here is much more than a mere expression of perception (as it is in Tristan, the later Corneille and Racine, for example), it is a means of perception. The characters of this theatre explore with language in the same way as another might with his eyes or his hands. They explore at random, and they reach no conclusions (that of the plot being unrelated to this) since, by its very nature, the possibilities of language are infinite. Thus it is without exaggeration that Ligdamon may speak of his "peine infinie" (p. 3): it is, as we see, the creation of language, and exists only within that language. As Ligdamon later says to Aegide:

> Depuis que le cahos enfanta la nature
> Et que les elements se virent des-vnis,
> Aucuns mots que les miens ne furent infinis,
> Et Minerue en mon lieu quoy que prudente et sage
> Perdroit de la raison & la force & l'usage. (II.1. p. 28)

Indeed, it is above all, not time and the glory he is going off to gain for himself that will convince Silvie of his worth, but the persuasion of Alcidor, who tells him:

> [. . .] ie n'espargneray ny paroles ny soins
> Pour rendre à tes desirs ployable ta Siluie (p. 13)

and it is the persuasion of Alcidor that convinces Ligdamon of Silvie's love for him, despite the evidence of his other senses:

> Ce discours enchanteur me vient ressusciter.
> Ha! bons Dieux, qu'aisément on se laisse flatter,

admits Ligdamon to his friend (p. 12).[32]

The notion of giving up one's reason to love, which, as we have seen, is a commonplace, is linked to that of the confusion of souls, of the relinquishing of one's particular and separate personality to have it mingle with that of the beloved. Ligdamon does not forget this when he sees Silvie coming towards him:

> O Ciel! fort à propos ie rencontre ma Dame,
> Mais pourray-ie parler puisque ie n'ay point d'ame?
> Oüy, l'objet qui la prit la préte en ce moment
> Pour chanter sa loüange & dire mon tourment. (I.1. p. 5)

The idea is never far absent: at the end of the same scene, it occurs again as Ligdamon and Alcidor bid one another farewell. The latter tells Ligdamon to be happy, he protests that he cannot; replies Alcidor:

> L'absence bannira peut estre ce soucy,

to which Ligdamon objects:

> Oüy, si ie m'esloignois, mais ie demeure icy. (p. 14)

He remains, as it were, in spirit, while his body goes off; but he takes the metaphor in all seriousness. This "spirit" is his very essence, not simply a memory -- or a memory whose effacing can occur only in death; which brings it to the same thing:

> Il faut dedans mon sang noyer ce souuenir. (p. 11)

In this playing on language, the tone is, naturally, subject to considerable fluctuation: from the seriousness of Ligdamon's laments, the spectator is likely to be abruptly taken to the humorous tone of the amusing scene between him and Silvie which immediately follows. As he sighs, she praises the beauty of nature, and he picks up each of her lines as a cue to make some comment linking her praises with his love:

> Sil.: Que le bruit des ruisseaux a d'agreables charmes
> Lig.: Pouuez vous voir l'eau sans penser à mes larmes?
> Sil.: Ie cherche dans ces prez la fraicheur des Zephirs.
> Lig.: Vous deuez ce plaisir au vent de mes soupirs. (p. 6)

This continues for a long time:

> Sil.: Ce petit papillon ne m'abandonne pas.
> Lig.: Mon coeur de la facon accompagne vos pas. (p. 7)

The stichomythia is itself, of course, a totally unrealistic device, through which the poet is quite visible. To the precious members of his audience, some of this repartee might appear seriously sophisticated, lightly amusing and subtle enough to avoid being gross. Part of this play, however, is the introduction of jokes somewhat more risqué, again at the whim of the speaker, and having nothing to do with the situation of the moment -- or, at least, not being necessitated by that situation. Ligdamon speaks to Silvie of the love she has aroused in him:

> Lig.: Donc vous mesconnoissez ce que vous faites naistre.
> Sil.: Chaste, ie n'ay point eu d'enfant iusqu'à ce iour. (p. 8)

The praise of nature, from which this little game derived, now takes the spectator in quite a different direction. His attention is brought directly to the scenery which surrounds the characters, and this attention here goes even further than we have seen it do in L'Amphytrite, Sylvie and the rest, as Scudéry's Silvie continues to admire the set:

> Icy l'on ne voit point sous la fraischeur de l'herbe
> Ny de serpent rusé, ny de crapaut superbe,
> Ou s'il s'en offre à l'oeil, on remarque à l'instant
> Que c'est celuy que l'onde a fait en serpentant;
> Cette onde est si tranquille, et si claire, & si pure,
> Que mes yeux la prendroient povr vne onde en peinture.
> (I.2. p. 15)

As if it were not enough for the actress to attract such attention to the scenery (here 44 lines, but Ligdamon has already brought much attention to it),she destroys all hope of illusion by talking of it as the painting it is. There is a kind of contradiction between her destruction of the illusion by comments calling attention to its artificiality, stressed on this occasion by her denial of it: "Elle n'emprunte rien de l'homme ny de l'art" (p. 15), and the attempt towards realism constituted by her matching the language to what is probably a scene change as she comments on the dawn.

> Dans ces bois innocens on ne connoist encore
> Aucun objet sanglant que le teint de l'Aurore,
> Nulle dispute aussi ne suruient en ces lieux
> Que celle des oyseaux à qui chantera mieux. (p. 15)[33]

This fluctuation thus created in the spectator's attention to the set seems to match the irony present in the language, by which the spectator's mental distance from the stage creation (as a whole) is kept continually ambiguous. With the same thing in mind, apparently, there follows immediately on this praise of the sylvan beauty, distinguished by its unhurried and even rhythm, the brusque shock of a somewhat less than enchanting exchange of words, as Alcidor enters to ask what she is doing "parmy la solitude." She answers him in straight fashion:

> Ie pratique vn conseil de tout temps enseigné,
> Qu'il vaut mieux estre seul que mal accompagné.

Alcidor, not wishing to be outdone, responds with considerable sarcasm:

> Certes ce compliment a mon ame rauie. (p. 16)

In this manner, the same language is turned around to become an instrument of cruelty, to bring the listener into a quite different kind of relationship with the characters. From afar he has been watching these light-footed creatures of fantasy flit through woods created by poetry, when suddenly the mood is broken and he finds himself face to face with two more familiar people. The fluctuation, once started, is maintained. Alcidor, allowed to say four words, launches into a description of Ligdamon's despair. Suddenly we are face to face with pure comedy, even farce:

> Alc.: I'ay connu Ligdamon, qui la face trempée
> Tournoit deuers son coeur le bout de son espée,
> Vous nommoit en pleurant, & lors les yeux bandez.
> Sil.: Il ne s'est point fait mal.
> Alc.: Patience, attendez,
> Les yeux, dy-ie, bandez tout droit deuers la pointe
> Aussitost à son coeur elle alloit estre iointe.
> Sil.: Mais vous pour le sauuer y courustes soudain.
> Alc.: Et malgré ses efforts ie luy retins la main.
> Sil.: Si bien donc qu'à tout mal soustraite est sa personne.
> (I.2. p. 18)

Thus is the scene between Alcidor and Ligdamon thrown into ridicule, at least to the spectator, although, in fact, the former is telling it as it did occur. As, at the time it had been created out of the language of Ligdamon's lament through which alone was he able to perceive his plight; as the spectator has been given the notion that Silvie is only pretending not to love Ligdamon; so now the reality of his suicide is thrown into doubt by Silvie. This is very far from the classical use of language, which may discuss, but never create, a situation, and through which the characters may come to perceive a choice with more or less lucidity. Here the characters never pierce their language. As we have suggested, they play with it and invent situations: all kinds of possibilities are presented, but no choice is to be made, nor can be made (since that, too, is in the language) between them.

As Silvie now suggests, it is possible that Ligdamon's behaviour is simply a play performed for their benefit:

> Alcidor, Alcidor, veux-tu que ie te die,
> Cet acte peut passer pour vne Comedie,
> Il se fust bien gardé d'entrer dans ce projet
> Si ses yeux n'eussent eu les tiens pour leur objet. (p. 18-19)

Silvie, as these characters so often do, seems to be placing herself next to the spectators in the auditorium, or to be creating a third level of "reality," intermediary between Ligdamon and the audience. Just as in the situation of the play within the play, the spectator in the auditorium has to adopt a "dual" distance in his appreciation of what is going on before him.

The ironic use of language never stops, whatever other devices may be used by the author to confuse the spectator. Alcidor continues to plead Ligdamon's case:

> Mais dis pourquoy ton oeil son vnique vainqueur
> Ne veut-il accepter le present de son coeur? (p. 19)

He is immediately rebuffed by Silvie's literal acceptance of his question in a passage of some humour:

> Qu'il garde ce beau don, pour moy ie le renuoye,
> Ie ne veux point passer pour vn oyseau de proye
> Qui se repaist de coeurs, & ce n'est mon dessein
> De ressembler vn monstre ayant deux coeurs au sein. (p. 20)[34]

The whole idea of the fusion of souls is here thrown into ridicule, not their particular situation itself. On the other hand, in view of her future love for Ligdamon, this passage contains a quite different type of irony. And this ridicule continues, as the literal and metaphorical intentions of the words continue to be deliberately confused:

> Alc.: A tort de tant d'attraits nature t'a pourueüe,
> Puisque vray Basilic on meurt en t'ayant veüe.
> Sil.: S'il meurt en me voyant qu'il esloigne ces lieux,
> Ou s'il n'en veut partir, qu'il se creue les yeux. (p. 20)

Alcidor proceeds to a revolting description of how her horribly decayed body in old age will make her regret her treatment of Ligdamon, who is dying for her, but whom she can cure:

> Sil.: Le Medecin ne peut vn defunt secourir.
> Alc.: Bien que ja trespassé, belle & cruelle Dame,
> Vn baiser seulement luy redonneroit l'ame.
> Sil.: Bon soir, pour cet effect i'ay l'esprit trop peu fort,
> Me preseruent les Cieux des baisers d'vn tel mort. (p. 21)

With this the scene is removed to Rothomage, and the rival team of Amerine and Lidias, whose mutual love is presently being disturbed by Aronthe. This is the first of these changes "de face" of which Scudéry speaks in his preface to this play, and of whose effect d'Aubignac and Mairet complain so: it breaks the illusion because it demands the spectator readjust to the idea of his being some considerable distance away from where he was a moment before. It is soon of increasing importance, since the two main characters make journeys from one place to the next, as well as Silvie at the end and an army which is laying siege to Rothomage (although we do not see the troops, the officers play a part). It happens that we are again in a "lieu solitaire," the site of a duel between Lidias and Aronthe over Amerine which is won by the former.

Unfortunately, he had not considered beforehand that, win or lose, he would have to leave Amerine, if he wished to avoid laying "sa teste au sanglant eschaffaut" (p. 23). He does not go alone, however:

> Adieu belle Amerine, aujourd'huy plein de flame
> Ie t'emporte en mon coeur, & reste dans ton ame.

Amerine now appears on stage, and, seeing him alone bewailing his misfortunes, is curious. He explains:

> Vous verrez vn amant qu'on ne peut secourir,
> Si vous tournez les yeux qui le faisoient mourir. (p. 24)

After suitable lamenting, he forbids her to flee with him, so she bids him farewell as he goes off into the forest:

> Amour y soit ton guide, adieu, reçoy mon ame
> Qui passe dans ta bouche en ce baiser de flame. (p. 26)

Despite the difference in situations then, between Lidias and Amerine, Silvie and Ligdamon, the images of the language are exactly similar: the language not only creates the situation, but creates variations on it through which it runs like a central musical theme, acting, therefore, as a kind of counterpoint -- or, to be more precise, creating variations as a kind of counterpoint to itself.

We are now removed to another place, where Aegide is trying to convince Ligdamon to grieve less:

> Estes-vous resolu de deuenir fontaine? (p. 27)

And lest we be tempted to laugh at this, let us be reminded that, where language is the creator, such a metamorphosis is quite possible: we have seen what happened to Leandre in l'Amphytrite, in Durval's Travaux d'Ulysse, the hero's companions change back into human form from that of pigs (II.2. pp. 40-48), lovers elsewhere occupy trees or rocks or fountains. Such a fate does not in the least deter Ligdamon, who continues grieving over the infinity of his vicissitudes. Aegide continues to argue about "ce mal qui la raison offense" (p. 29), for, says he:

> Le supreme laurier des belles actions
> S'acquiert à surmonter ses propres passions. (p. 28)

Easier said, of course, than done. These are not the Cornelian heroes of a decade later: here we will see no victory of reason, nor even, if it comes to that, a struggle. The hero of these plays does not attempt to quit his melancholy -- only the achievement of his love will satisfy, and to leave his "folie" would be to abandon his beloved. Besides he cannot struggle, for the world about him reflects his love. If, as we have seen with Tristan, man is the microcosm, then the relationship operates no less in reverse. He is, declares Ligdamon, with a melancholy glee, to be compared with a wounded deer fleeing across some plain, thinking thus to flee also from his pain:

> Tel suis-ie absent de l'oeil mon vnique vainqueur,
> Ie fuis, mais en fuyant i'en ay le trait au coeur,
> I'ay tousiours dans l'esprit ce visage adorable,
> Comme l'ombre d'vn corps se void inseparable,
> Toutes sortes d'objets sont autant de portraits
> Où ie voy son humeur ainsi que ses attraits;
> Ces monts à qui la gresle est tousiours inconnue,
> A cause que leur chef est plus haut que la nue,
> Me vont representant l'excés de son orgueil,
> Les rocs sa dureté qui me met au cercueil
> [. . .] (p. 29)

and so on, for thirty-eight more lines. Yet what is interesting about this passage is not only the way the lover confuses himself with the world around him, nor simply that he gets carried away by the words, but, particularly since we are speaking of a performed play, it is the way this attitude of the lamenting lover visibly becomes that of the creative poet, deliberately showing off to the listener:

> Mais de peindre son coeur, c'est vn acte impossible
> La nature n'a rien de si fort insensible,
> C'est là que le pinceau me demeure perclus.
> Or passons aux beautez que nous ne voyons plus,
> La rose en son esclat me presente sa bouche,
> La neige peint sa gorge, où personne ne touche. (p. 30)

Ligdamon produces a blason to his "Dame" in the style of a multitude of sixteenth century poets using a consciously worn Petrarchian imagery. This is mingled always with his laments, until finally he returns to the confusion of love and death:

> Pour quitter cet objet que l'amour me fait suiure
> Il faut premierement que ie cesse de viure. (p. 30)

Not that this would settle matters, however, for he would still follow his lady in "le pays des morts." Thus he is doomed to live and love, with everlastingly in his soul "Vn enfer portatif" (p. 31). At the end of this scene a further humorous trait touching the use of language, continues the distancing effect. Ligdamon tries to convince his servant that since his soul is in prison in his body it is his duty to set it at liberty with his dagger. Aegide remarks on the "rare eloquence" with which this "paradoxe en Sophiste" is presented, and continues to protest:

> Mais stupide et grossier iusques au dernier point,
> Ce discours est si haut que ie ne l'entends point. (pp. 32-33)

With this he creates the same kind of effect as Silvie has done in her rebuff of Alcidor: Ligdamon's perception of his reality is thrown into doubt, and the spectator must needs laugh and again view the action from outside.

Now they come upon the tracks of an army, and Ligdamon decides to follow them to the camp and enlist, hopefully to meet a glorious death "au lit d'honneur." As it happens, however, they first meet one Nicandre, brother of Aronthe, who, taking Ligdamon for Lidias (and this is the first knowledge the spectator has that these two are doubles), challenges him and forces him to fight. He is wounded in the arm, and Ligdamon has Aegide take him to a nearby village, seeing him off with the angry words:

> Vous estes moins blessé dans le bras qu'au cerueau. (p. 35)

And indeed, the confusion caused by the two identical youths throughout the remainder of the play is not far from the delusions of a madness. Whether the spectator was also caught up in that particular confusion would depend on how far the two actors were distinguished from one another, something we have no way of knowing. Either way he was almost certain to be kept in some confusion by it. Now, however, we change our positions again, and are put face to face with two new characters.

These actors are not in the least afraid of creating their own roles. Ligdamon has made himself into the suffering lover, Sylvie presents herself as the hard-hearted and distant lady (always with the reservation that the role they adopt may not reflect any truth), now Merovée presents himself as the magnanimous

> [. . .] Prince exempt d'ingratitude,
> Qui pour son interest ne veut rien butiner,
> Et ne veut tout auoir qu'afin de tout donner. (p. 37)

Clidamant, Ligdamon's lord and liegeman of Merovée, presents himself as Scudéry was probably wont to do:

> Le nom de Roy me manque, & non le coeur de Roy.

The King, not to be outdone, suggests he make Clidamant a sort of Belisaire, partaker of his throne. This suggestion is left in the air and they are obliged to suspend their exchange of chivalry upon the arrival of Ligdamon, who now, however, fits into the new word picture they are painting. No longer is he the languishing lover, he now belongs in some romance: as Merovée describes him:

> [. . .] ce guerrier dont la démarche grave
> Semble forcer les yeux à iuger qu'il est brave. (p. 38)

Ligdamon, at the astonishment of Clidamant, is permitted to introduce himself, somewhat ambiguously, since the phrase he uses refers to the lover and the liegeman:

> Ligdamon, le premier des seruiteurs parfaicts. (p. 38)

Clidamant adds a testimonial intended to give him command of the forward ranks, adding, finally, as though to convince the King that his praise is not just so many words:

> Sire, la verité vous parle par ma bouche,

a phrase which recalls to us the great power of language.

Thus, the spectator is introduced to a pair of scenes (across the break between second and third acts, however) whose tone and import are quite different from the general tone of the play: he is placed in the midst of some tale of chivalry. Following the introduction of the new characters (including Ligdamon who has neatly effected his change by his ambiguous presentation of his new personality), the romance is continued by a mutual exchange of praise which finally terminates with a discussion between Merovée and Clidamant (pp. 40-45) as to how the power of kings should best be used. This scene, in a language as high-flown as the rest, has little to do with the play as it concerns the two pairs of lovers, but, once again, makes sure the spectator is freed from concern: his interest, for the moment is in the sense of the discussion. It is true that the question of whether or not there will be a battle is of some interest to the spectator and, to some extent, the discussion as to whether Merovée will be clement or harsh towards the Neustriens is important in this connection. It develops, however, into a discussion focussing purely on the nature and achievement of kingly power, and, as such, calls for a quite different response from the spectator than does the love interest.

As the third act begins this new tone is sustained as Merovée lauds Clidamant for having saved his life and thus the kingdom. Clidamant remarks that all this is purely the creation of language, it is therefore no more real than its opposite might be (and in fact, it appears that Ligdamon was largely responsible for the favorable outcome of the battle):

> Vous formez ma vertu de l'air comme vn fantosme,
> Et voulez faire grand ce qui n'est qu'vn atosme. (III.1. p. 51)

For a while then they strive to outdo one another in praise of their mutual valour (pp. 51-53). Finally, Merovée explains to "vne troupe d'habitans de Paris" what the deed was whose glory they have been so busy creating. Once again, the poet appears in Merovée's creation as he describes Clidamant's arrival to rescue himself and rout the enemy like some avenging angel:

> Citoyens, vistes vous iamais l'oyseau de proye
> Fondre sur les perdrix qu'il descouure à sa voye,
> N'auez-vous iamais veu quelque loup bocager
> Escarter vn troupeau qu'il treuue sans berger,
> Ou l'horrible sanglier dont la forte defence

> Escarte en vn moment la meute qui l'offence;
> Tel parut ce Heros [. . .] (p. 55)

The battle, as the King tells it, reaches the proportions of a battle in some geste:

> A chaque coup donné sans doute on voyoit bas
> Ou la teste, ou la cuisse, ou la iambe, ou le bras;
> L'abondance du sang respandu par la plaine
> Augmenta d'vn ruisseau les ondes de la Seine,
> Et rougit tellement la riuiere en son flus,
> Qu'à l'abord l'Ocean ne la connoissoit plus. (p. 55)

Not that his own deeds are any less incredible than those of his liegeman:

> Moy qui pour espargner le tribut d'vn denier
> Auois fait vn tresor au pasle nautonnier,
> Qui pour sauuer ma vie au milieu des allarmes
> Me couurois d'vn rempart fait de corps de gens-darmes
> [. . .] (p. 56)

All this has absolutely nothing to do with any normal perception of reality, and the spectator -- or listener -- is not intended to accept it as such. However, as valid a creation of language as love, this epic interlude presents another possible perception. The spectator is placed in the midst of a constantly fluctuating tone and a continually changing perception: by the changing aims of the language no less than by the other, notably scenic, elements of the play.

This particular interlude comes to a close when the King promises Clidamant, as recompense for his valour, that they will try to recover Ligdamon from Rothomage, where he fears he has been carried a prisoner. The closing is made the more abrupt by a change both in tone and in place. The new setting is the wood of the first scene of the play again, and the new tone is not too dissimilar. The poet continues to keep himself in sight.

We return to stances of Silvie, who has finally fallen in love with Ligdamon (or is it that she has simply decided to show it now?) and is begging for his return:

> Reuiens pour te venger & pour me secourir,
> Tu le peux me faisant mourir. (III.2. p. 59)

Thus we are returned to the ambiguity of love and death, the typical theme of those scenes. This time, however, Silvie allows herself to become ironic at the expense of the supposed projection of her emotion, with a critical comment on the stances she is using. For a moment, the actress intervenes to make a remark on the verses with which the playwright has presented her:

> Que ces vers sont charmans, i'y treuue vne peinture
> Du malheureux succés de ma triste auanture,
> Celuy qui les dicta plus sçauant que rimeur
> [. . .] (III.2. pp. 59-60)

This kind of fluctuation, seemingly designed to close completely, if only momentarily, the spectator's "psychical distance" must be necessarily brief if the author wants to cause a fluctuation rather than the adoption of a new distance based on a Silvie slightly different from the one to which we are accustomed. So, since it is only by constant fluctuation that the illusion is kept before the spectator, the actress is thrust aside to allow the role to reappear:

> Mais où va ce propos? quel excés de folie
> Me fair ainsi flatter dans ma melancholie? (p. 60)

It is at this moment, when the spectator has just been obliged to remark upon the flickering stage illusion before him, that Scudéry chooses to lead him deep into a new confusion. Silvie's melancholy madness is made visible in a sense by the arrival of Lidias, pining for his love. She, naturally, takes him for his double, Ligdamon, and seeks to comfort him accordingly. Being an honorable youth, Lidias refuses her advances, disclaiming any acquaintance with her. His name, he tells her, is Lidias, not Ligdamon, and he is a Neustrian. Silvie refuses to accept his story, claiming it is a pretense, and there follows a series of responses revealing a confusion not far removed from that of madness:

> Sil.: O Dieux! soyez tesmoins de cette trahison
> Lid.: Demandez leur plutost la veuë ou la raison.
> [. . .]
> Sil.: Ie ne sçais que respondre à son extrauagance. (p. 64)

Lidias now asks to be directed to Marsilly,[35] and Silvie, ironically accepts "Ligdamon's" new personality she thinks he is creating for himself:

> Neustrien de Forests, ie m'en vay vous l'apprendre
> Pourueu qu'en méme temps ce bel oeil mon vainqueur
> M'apprenne le chemin qui meine à vostre coeur. (p. 64)

Abruptly, the spectator is removed once more to Rothomage, and must quickly readjust to the conception of the same set representing this new place. Amerine, in a long lament (6811), protests the imprisonment of her "Lidias;" but, as always, even the expression of the most wretched of emotions is not free from an irony which practically negates its force (what force it has, since the long lament is already a fairly transparent device) and obliges the spectator to draw back once again. Amerine now complains to the gods of their severity:

> Mais où va ce propos? ces Dieux imaginaires
> Dont le vulgaire parle en ses mots ordinaires,
> Ce sont des Dieux de bois, ou de bronze, ou d'airain,
> Qui n'ont que le seul nom d'vn pouuoir souuerain:
> Ou si cette creance a rien de veritable,
> Ce sont des Dieux gourmands qui sont tousiours à table,
> Le nectar fait aller leur cerueau de trauers,
> De la mesme façon qu'ils guident l'uniuers. (III.3. p. 67)

Lidias' mother now comes on stage to persuade Amerine to save her "son" by marrying him, as the law of the city provides. Amerine, despite her blushes, agrees, and the scene closes on a neat little piece of irony, since the spectator is well aware of the vanity of Amerine's hope:

> O ciel! ne permettez cet acte executé,
> Que ie puisse esprouuer mesme infidelité. (p. 70)

Knowing that Ligdamon must refuse, and that Amerine will react as though to an infidelity, it is almost as though the characters had become the spectator's puppets. He is far ahead of the characters, and will remain so. It seems doubtful that this means that the spectator's distance now remains constant; it would rather imply a readjustment, for, as we have suggested, it is extremely rare that he remain throughout completely distanced from the stage; and it is just such a removal which would be implied here, with the spectator as a kind of puppeteer. Thus, once this readjustment has been made -- for he will be aware from now on of what will be the reactions of the character -- Scudéry is free to maintain the same kind of fluctuation as before.

This takes us through Ligdamon's laments concerning the frightful prison in which he now finds himself in fact instead of in metaphor (III. 4. pp. 70-72),[36] although afire with the light of his memory of Silvie, as he reaches a kind of exaltation, not, like Hardy's, a tragic madness under a crushing universe, but an enjoyed melancholia from which he can create a personality for himself:

> Car si la mort venoit me prendre à cet instant
> Ie finirois en cygne & mourrois en chantant. (p. 73)

Aegide has another name for this attitude, and refuses to allow Ligdamon to turn himself into a lyrical martyr:

> Mais forcer la nature & creuser son tombeau,
> C'est estre maniaque & foible de cerueau. (p. 74)

Gradually now, the spectator is prepared for the resolution of the confusion. First Amerine receives a dream, a dream which takes on, as always, the same force of "reality" as all the other creations of this language. She has dreamed of her own death at the hands of someone

> Que vostre oeil abusé prit pour vn autre absent (p. 79),

as she is informed by the soul of Lidias.

Another brusque change of place brings us before Lidias once again, using stances to indicate his bewilderment at the mad way the world is treating him (IV.2. pp. 81-82):

> Que le destin iniurieux
> Qui trouble toutes mes delices
> A pour moy d'estranges malices,
> Et qu'il se monstre furieux;
> Il fait qu'vne fille aueuglée
> D'vne passion desreglée
> Dont son foible esprit est charmé,
> Me poursuit d'vn dessein fantasque,
> I'en suis aimé sans estre aimé,
> Et croy moy mesme auoir vn masque. (p. 81)

This, of course, carries him straightway to toy with the notion that he is perhaps something other than he thinks. The conflict here is the same as that which occurs in Les Sosies, in Les Menechmes, and so on (see above pp. 101 - 102 and n.24): it is between the self in one's own conception and the self in the eyes of others. To put it in Sartrian terms, it is between the pour soi and the pour autrui (not that I have any intention of transforming Scudéry into a Sartrian existentialist). It appears to Lidias that Silvie is trying to create a new personality for him:

> La Nymphe qui me persecute
> En m'accusant de trahison
> Tasche dans vne erreur extreme
> De m'oster auec la raison
> Le creance d'estre moy mesme. (p. 82)

This doubt of his true personality, it need scarcely be said, is an echo of that doubt which has already been created in the spectator by the continual fluctuation of distance, which has thrown the whole nature of reality and our perception of it into question.

He is willing, however, despite the danger, to return to Rothomage with Silvie, to find his own personality, to prove his and Amerine's mutual love which he has been claiming (pp. 85-87).

It is to Rothomage that the scene now jumps again, and it is there that we will remain for the remainder of the play. Now we are put before the judgment scene (IV.3), where, after a fiery condemnation by the three judges for his supposed murder of Aronthe and reason in fighting for Merovée, after an indignant refusal of Merovée's herald, who enters at this moment, Ligdamon is to die fighting lions. Since Aegide gives a running commentary of the fight we may safely assume that it occurs off stage,although the lions apparently appear on the stage here (as one did also in Pyrame et Thisbé), since Mahelot asks for "un antre d'ou sort des lions" (Mémoire, 70). These lions are represented, one supposes,[37] by actors dressed in skins: if so, they are not at all intended to convince, and, again,make sure the spectator is aware of the stage.

The entire last act of the play dwells on the confusion of love and death, on the problem of the self and the other's "capturing" of it. Ligdamon is left even more confused, because he has now been saved by Amerine, who is to be allowed to marry him. He, however, is resolved to die, and complains about Silvie:

> Ha! ie discours fort mal, la raison m'est rauie,
> Il est vray que mon coeur conserue ses appas,

Mais ce coeur dont ie parle, ô Dieux! ie ne l'ay pas,
La cruelle le garde afin que ie ne meure,
Car sçachant que c'est là que nostre ame demeure
Son oeil larron subtil à dessein l'a rauy,
Afin qu'en mourant il soit tousiours seruy,
Et semble que le sort le conspire auec elle,
Car la parque pour moi n'est point assez mortelle.
(V.1. p. 105)

For the moment, it is as though Silvie's possession of his soul is preventing him from dying, and it seems to be this attitude which continues. The language, at first, however, as it did in L'Amphytrite, seems to be winning the battle. Ligdamon, obliged to marry Amerine, tries hard to avoid it: he cannot accept the personality being thrust on him any more than she is able to accept his "real" personality:

Lig.: Vouliez-vous que mon coeur par vne offence extreme
Allast confesser d'estre vn autre que soy mesme?
Am.: Veux tu par vn discours traistre, malicieux,
Abuser ma memoire & démentir mes yeux? (V.2. p. 116)

His use of "vous" and her use of "tu" emphasizes perhaps this dual vision. The offense he speaks of is not simply the offense he would do her and his love for Silvie, it is also that of a denial of his own essence. Faced with this duality which he cannot resolve, he must die. Indeed, he and Amerine have already taken the poison he has requested. Perhaps here he may be compared with Leandre, who in a similar position, faced on the one hand with his pour soi, which is essentially that of a human and thus unable to love a goddess, and on the other with another essence which can be, and is, loved by a goddess, also resolves to die.

Finally Ligdamon "dies," with a final plea that Silvie be informed:

Reua-t'en en Forests, Aegide, vers ma Dame,
Dis-luy que dans ma cendre encor reuit la flame,
Et que pour ne fausser ce que i'avois iuré
Ie suis mort en martyr de son oeil adoré. (p. 121)

Real death is confused with an erotic death, and Ligdamon, like Amerine, has become more a metaphor than a physical reality: he has succumbed to the language. As Aegide says to Sylvie, who has now arrived and whom he is accusing of having caused Ligdamon's death, she need scarcely be upset:

> Peux-tu bien craindre vn corps dont tu possedes l'ame?
> (p. 124)

She accepts the challenge, and undertakes to call him back from the apparent death in which he is now lying: the confusion between the metaphor and its original goal is now complete:

> Vous m'auez cent fois dit que la voix de Silvie
> Pourroit vous rappeller de la mort à la vie,
> Et que malgré le sort qui commande aux humains
> Vostre destin estoit enfermé dans mes mains;
> Sus donc, cher Ligdamon, paroissez veritable. (p. 125)

Her demand is rapidly fulfilled, for it turns out that he and Amerine had only been given an opiate, and the doctor who sold it is easily able to revive them with the necessary potions. Both Amerine and Ligdamon, upon awaking, confuse life with death (pp. 129-130), so that, although things are finally clarified at the last minute, the play is able to end on the same note of ambiguity as has been sustained throughout.

It would seem, then, that by maintaining a constant fluctuation in the spectator's "psychical distance" and by preventing him from ever being able to adopt a certain and fixed position towards either the characters or the action, both Ligdamon et Lidias and L'Amphytrite concentrate the attention of the spectator on the ambiguity of his own perception of reality. This is achieved by showing that perception is communicable only through the mediation of language: that language, therefore, often takes upon itself the role of the senses; by creating a set and supplying props that are partly realistic and partly non-realistic, accompanied by suitably ambiguous comments upon it from the actors, by regularly stripping the actor of his role, and so on. Thus the major (and perhaps only) theme of these plays may be résuméd in the words of Amerine, when she remarks to Ligdamon (V.2. p. 118):

> Ie ne te connois point? tu veux dire peut-estre
> Que changeant tous le iours on ne te peut connestre.

C. Language as creator and destroyer of character; the actor and his set

The examples of Amphytrite and Ligdamon et Lidias show us how deliberately precarious is the illusion created by the playwrights of this period. They indicate that madness is more often the medium than the mere illustration of a theme: the play itself sets the spectator into a kind of hallucination. This is to be taken in a somewhat different sense than Baty's expression of the essential purpose of the play, which is to achieve "un univers expressif et cohérent et de provoquer dans la salle une hallucination collective."[38] The theatrical universe created here is coherent enough; but it is coherent in its incoherence, if I may be allowed the oxymoron. That is to say, it deliberately sets out to confuse the spectator and to include him in a hallucination, not simply in the sense of a new, and possibly unfamiliar, world resulting from a total and collective absorption in what is occurring on stage, but in that of a kind of madness subject to abrupt intrusions into and from the "real" world of normal perception, a world kept before the spectator by the stage, it is true, but in which the stage itself is but a part: outside "reality," equally, is as much a part. The spectator does not merely watch the imbalance of the madman, he does not even share it by identification with the madman (even supposing that were possible to provoke), he is himself urged into that very imbalance. Monléon's fantasy suddenly becomes exteriorized to assail the spectator's eyes. Scudéry's pastoral tragi-comedy makes concrete an apparent metaphor. Both achieve this transformation here after a constant fluctuation of the kind we have been describing.

Similarly Mairet, in the last act of Sylvie, presents a character, Florestan, who must fight through obstacles which have become physical, whose defeat will assure the success both of his love for Meliphile and of the mutual love of Thelame and Sylvie. Corneille does the same in Clitandre (IV. 2 and 3), whose stage storm, as it reflects that of the characters' relationships, also furthers the action, since it leaves the prince stranded without his horse and thus in a position to save the life of Dorise.

These are some of the clearer moments when this "concretization" of the metaphor occurs. There is, however, a less obvious, but certainly equally common, means of using language to create doubt in the mind of the spectator. This is the extensive use of language to destroy its own creations. This use has been to some extent apparent in Ligdamon et Lidias: as when the actor's persona is suddenly bared, for example. The two most methodical users of this device, however, are Rotrou and Corneille.

Corneille's Le Menteur (1642-1643) is the most obvious play of approximately this period where language creates a world deliberately presented as mythical by the author. Here, though, the spectator accedes to this world _through_ a character, so that the play should properly be considered as belonging to a later style. However, even if we had not seen it in Scudéry, the very fact that language can, and does, destroy not only its own credibility, but also that of the characters and situations visible through it, implies -- even depends upon -- its prior ability to create these things. As the madman in Du Ryer's _Argenis_ comments on his taking over of Poliarque's name and person:

> Ie l'ay trop bien acquis [,] la mesme renommee
> A force d'en parler s'est presque consomee.
> (Dernier iournee, I.5. p. 26)

Or as Alidor boasts to Cleandre in _La Place royalle_ of his power over Angelique:

> Cleandre elle est à toy, i'ay flechy son courage
> Que ne peut l'artifice, & le fard du langage!
> (III.6.11. 905-906).

Since the play's very existence depends in the main (at this time) on the creative power of language, we shall concentrate here on its use for destructive purposes.

In the last passage quoted, that language which creates its own worlds is deliberately held up to the spectator as a pretence, whose purpose is deceit. We may indeed see _La Place royalle_ (1633-1634?) as in some sense a turning point: throughout language represents a deliberately unreal level, opposed to a reality for which Alidor himself now stands. We shall have a little more to say of this play later, for it already suggests the close of an era by its opposition between language and character, in a way Mairet's _Sophonisbe_ (1634), for example, a play generally considered "classical," does not. The average play of the period does not throw doubt on the language at all as systematically as does _La_

Place royalle, rather do they prefer to occasionally interrupt the action to comment, as it were, in various ways on the language and its creations, so as to break the spectator's attention. This comment is almost always a "destruction," for it devalues the character or his situation so as to cast considerable doubt upon his reality. There seem to be two principal ways of doing this (although basically, perhaps, they become virtually indistinguishable). The language itself may simply be "devalued," by a multitude of means, or a character's existence may be thrown into question by mockery of the terms he uses. One may argue, with some justice, that in fact any time the language is brought into doubt, then so is the character who is using it.

There are fewer examples of the second case, so we will take those first. In *La Place royalle* Angélique is reduced by Alidor to nothing. She has been created essentially as the precious lover, so that when Alidor, who has upset her with a rude letter, returns, she expects suitable contrition on his part, and says so. He thereupon mocks her:

> Vous estes en colere, & vous dites des pointes!
> Ne présumiés vous point que i'irois à moins iointes
> Les yeux enflez de pleurs, & le coeur de soupirs
> Vous faire offre à genoux de mille repentirs?
> (II.2.11. 401-406)

She contemplates suicide, but decides rather to try and overcome her love. To the spectator she becomes at this point a pathetic object of pity for whom the defense of language has fallen. The precious lover has disappeared, to be replaced by something much more real, and as she eschews love so too with language, which was her only means of conceiving it:

> Restes impertinents d'vne flame insensée,
> Ennemis de mon heur, sortez de ma pensée,
> Ou si vous m'en peignez encore quelques traits,
> Laissez là ses vertus, peignez moy ses forfaits. (II.3.11. 453-6)

She is forced by Alidor to refuse the love which exists for her (at least, as far as the spectator can see) only in terms of preciosity: but it is this very language which has created her as a character. We see this again in the same play in the scene (II.6) between Lisis and Philis. Philis, having congratulated herself on the speed with which she has rid herself of Dorante, tells Lisis that he can now:

> Me conter de quels feux tu te sens l'ame attainte. (l. 518)

This is already a mockery, since Philis's role throughout has been to laugh at the "perfect" lover, and to make comments whose essential purpose is to deny the existence of this lover; here the mockery goes further, for Lisis takes her seriously and proceeds to view himself as the very lover whom the spectator already knows to be non-existent:

> Vous estes ma Maistresse, & moy sous vostre empire
> Je dois suiure vos loix, & non y contredire,
> Et pour vous obeir mes sentiments domptez,
> Se reglent seulement dessus vos volontez. (ll. 529-532)

Not seldom is this doubt cast by the character himself, rather than by one of the others. Lysimant, who at the start of La Diane is betrothed to Orante, is actually quite cold towards his fiancée, and in a monologue (thus between himself and the audience) comments on the deceitful nature of his praises of her charms:

> Je les vois, je les loue, et je parle en amant:
> Plus libre que jamais, et plus froid pour Orante
> Que je ne le serois pour une indifférente,
> Je parle toutefois et d'amour et d'attraits
> Comme si ma froideur se rendoit à ses traits. (II.3)

It almost appears here that the actor himself is talking rather than the character he is supposedly playing. The impression is made the stronger because the scene is between the actor and the spectator alone. This kind of doubt is, naturally, less common than that which remains *inside* the play; that is to say, where the character, as such, doubts whether he is what he thinks he is. In *Les Occasions perdues*, when there is considerable confusion towards the end as to which man is with which lady, Clorimand, who happens still to be out on the street, overhears other characters say that he is with both the queen and Isabelle (this last bit of information coming from the lady herself!). Not surprisingly, Clorimand himself is left somewhat confused by this state of affairs:

> Ah! que tout est contraire à mes chastes faveurs!
> Dieux! quand finirez-vous ce dédale d'erreurs?
> Lysis, puis-je etre ici, chez elle, et chez la reine?
> Hélas! quel Jupiter baise mon Alquemène? (V.9)

Of this we have already seen numerous examples, and we need dwell on it no longer (see above, pp. 101-102, n. 24, and p. 140).

The most usual means of this type of destruction is through a ridiculing of language itself. The simplest means, but one which, for reasons which will be quite apparent, becomes the least used, is vulgarity. One of the best examples of this is to be found in Auvray's *Innocence descouverte* (1608), where Thomas continually mocks Marsilie's passion in this way. Nearer to the period we are examining is Schelandre's *Tyr et Sidon* (1628) which makes considerable use of the vulgar (e.g., Première journée, III.5; IV.1), which is reduced to the obscene in the scenes between the old lecher Zorote, the page dressed as a girl, and Zorote's eunuch (Ie. J., IV.8, 9, 10 and 11). This play even ends on a rather dubious note: Zorote and Almodice, nurse of the Tyrian princesses, are to be burned alive together, the first for having caused the death of Léonte, prince of Tyre, who was having an affair with his wife, and the second for provoking the suicide of Cassandre, princess of Tyre, through her efforts as an entremetteuse. Pharnabaze condemns them in terms allowing a risqué joke by the archers:

Phar.: [. . .]
Et qu'un mesme buscher soit leur lict à tous deux,
Comme en un mariage egal et digne d'eux.
Arch.: Vieillard, si, toy vivant, ta femme estoit trop belle,
Ne crains point que là bas un tel sort te martelle:
Tu ne deviendras pas cornu par celle-cy.
Zorote: Je serois bien mieux veuf que d'espouser ainsi.
(IIe. J., V.5. p. 225)

This kind of an ending tends to make mockery of the high-flown terms of other parts of the play: the traditional laments, and so on. In Rotrou's Hypocondriaque, vulgarity is also used. The innocent shepherdess, Cléonice, is to be carried off by Lisidor and his friend Eristhène. They come across her sleeping in the meadows, as the former is busy justifying to his friend his project to place "ce soleil dans mon lict" (II.2. p. 19). He kisses her, and she wakes accusing him of a lack of discretion. This is followed by a rather indecent discussion based on the not very ambiguous conceit of "ces deux monts de roche" (p. 23). The lady is not at all abashed by this turn of the conversation, and keeps up her end undismayed. Language is here debased by a false confusion between real meaning and apparent meaning. False, because in fact there is no apparent meaning, despite the fact that the style they maintain in the conversation appears to imply one. The terms of preciosity, as not seldom happens, are applied to the indecent: the metaphor is so transparent as to lose its raison d'etre. In this particular instance, it also changes the character of Cléonice, since she can no longer appear to the spectator as the innocent she originally pretended to be. Her subsequent attempts to seduce Cloridan confirm this new character.

Not far removed from this technique is a similar devaluation, no longer vulgar, but working along the same principles. We have seen Aegide use it in Ligdamon et Lidias, Sosie uses it in les Deux Sosies. This is to take the words of one's master and apply them to something considerably less elevated, or, quite simply, to mock the terms he uses. In La Bague de l'Oubly, Fabrice, the jester, makes fun of the king's love for Liliane:

> Quel avantage, ô Dieux! Fabrice a sur des rois,
> Et combien je me ris d'amour et de ses lois!
> Ce prince à cet enfant voit son ame asservie,
> Il forme ses desseins, il gouverne sa vie,
> Il trouble sa raison, il engage sa foi,
> Et peut autant sur lui que Bacchus sur moi. (I.7.1. 112)

In a similar fashion, Guillaume mocks Polidor's lamenting throughout Du Ryer's Vendanges de Suresne, concerning the apparent relationship between Tirsis and Dorimène:

> Pol.: Je viens de voir piller les plus grands biens du monde.
> Gui.: Comment! quelques soldats en secret assemblez
> Sont ils venus piller et nos vins et nos bleds?
> Ce sont les plus grands biens que nous sçaurions attendre.
> Pol.: Je parle des baisers que Tirsis vient de prendre.
> Gui.: Vous parlez de baisers, c'est un precieux fruit,
> Cela merite bien qu'on fasse tant de bruit.
> Je prefere aux baisers des plus belles du monde
> Les humides baisers d'une tasse profonde. (III.5. pp. 115-116)

In Les Occasions perdues, Clorimand apostrophizes the heavens as he comes on a night-time rendezvous, asking that all light disappear, since his love dare not be seen. His servant, Lysis, finds an appropriate twist to mock his conceit, which actually echoes the humorous comment of another servant, Isabelle, to her mistress the queen earlier in the play, when the latter was bewailing the difficulties of loving a man lower than herself in rank. Then Isabelle has posed the ironic question:

> Aimez-vous un rocher, un arbre, une fontaine?

Now Lysis asks his master:

> Adorez-vous quelqu'un de ces oiseaux de nuit
> Qu'on ne peut jamais voir quand le soleil nous luit?
> Un hibou cause-t-il votre amoureuse peine?
> Auriez-vous bien, Monsieur, une âme si peu saine? (III.2)

Fabrice, again, of La Bague de l'Oubly, mocks Alphonse's pining for love:

> Avoir donné son coeur, c'est être en mauvais point:
> Moi, j'ai besoin du mien, et ne le donne point.
> (I.2.1. 105)

The mockery in these examples is not far removed from that we have already seen (above, p. 129 and n.34), where the metaphor becomes real. Here the humor, which changes the attitude of the spectator, is a consequence of the reduction of an analogy to a reality all its own, so that it is answered (in these examples, by the servant) in terms quite alien to the original thought. It is as though the author were searching for a stage verisimilitude which may be independent of a purely literary illusion, and is thus constantly reducing his literary world. He holds it up to ridicule. He appears to have, as yet, however, no other illusion with which to replace it -- or rather, no definite or permanent illusion. He has not yet discovered personality. Thus the destruction of language simply uncovers layers of illusion, which always remain apparent. Metaphors and other tropes, which are essentially literary, and therefore, in this theatre, are now coming into conflict with a more conscious setting of the play (although earlier they may perhaps have created a satisfactory illusion), are taken apart as soon as they are created, or rather, as soon as they are repeated, since these are the clichés of preciosity that are being mocked. It is, of course, quite clear that the "classical" theatre by no means scorned the precious cliché: the difference may be that it did not oppose this cliché to another reality, but presented it simply as the mediator between the stage reality and the reality of the spectator: it cannot be torn down, because it is no more than the interpreter of a personality. That is to say, it fulfills the normally accepted functions of language: to convey meaning _through_, not _by_ its use. There it is the _signifié_ which is important, here it is the _signifiant_. Language in the classical theatre does not question itself, it does not disrupt the even tone of the play, it does not wonder at the type of illusion it is offering. It thereby permits the spectator to do what his predecessor never could: enter into a character and take on his emotions. Here the spectator is kept at one moment aloof, at another he is urged towards a character. The mockery of language is also the mockery of the illusion.

There are other ways of achieving this effect. The pun is one; and, in a sense, it does a similar trick. We have seen Amerine's rather hideous request of Ligdamon that he open her up and find his image graven in her bosom. In _Les Folies de Cardenio_, Fernant, who is trying to force Luscinde to marry him in accordance with her father's wishes but against her own, since she loves, and is loved by, Cardenio, manages to get a word of acquiescence from her when they are both before her father. Her grief at this apparent surrender is such that she falls to the floor in a swoon, but to all appearances dead. Indeed, as she falls, she says she has killed herself:

> [. . .] quittant Cardenie il falloit bien mourir,
> Puisque l'on me vouloit separer de mon ame. (II.4. p. 21)

Fernant annoyed at this (!), says that after such temerity and cruelty

> Je ne te verray plus, ma raison retournée
> Ne sçauroit supporter ta froideur obstinée.

Such puns, usually somewhat horrible, are very common: not necessarily by a confusion between image and reality (in this particular case, the pun might be made obvious to the spectator only because of Luscinde's apparently dead body lying on the stage), also by the confusion between two different images: such as Théophile's much maligned blushing dagger in Pyrame et Thisbé.

Confusion between image and reality does not necessarily lead to humour. In L'Hypocondriaque once again, Lisidor, before his attempt to carry her off, courts Cléonice. She asks him for some proof of his love, and his reply shows a similar treatment of concerns we have already seen in L'Amphytrite and Ligdamon et Lidias:

> Que je quitte le jour? (I.2.1. 13)

This she must refuse, since it would mean his love would weigh on her forever. His death would consecrate his love by making him a martyr to it. But what is to be recalled here is that death is the centre of love for these lovers: death of the self whether the love is accepted or refused, for the soul has already gone to the beloved. Physical death is but the outward symbol: if she accepts the sign of his love, she accepts his soul: she would have to accept his love. Again, the metaphor is taken for the real, only this time, instead of taking the spectator out of the play, it thrusts him deeper into it.

If the language can be destroyed by a kind of internal twist, it can also come in for outright mockery. This mockery, too, seems to adopt two principal manners: firstly, by comparing the speech of a character to a literary model, secondly, by suggesting that an actor is making the most of an opportunity to show his eloquence.

Suggesting that a speaker is playing a part by copying something read, often leads to a comment that recalls directly the illusion in which they are presently playing: in Clorinde, Lisante turns to the heroine with the words:

> Ou eut prisé jadis l'ardeur qui vous transporte,
> Mais le siècle n'est plus d'aimer de telle sorte.
> Représentez-vous point ces reines de romans
> Qui ne l'ont pas été des coeurs de leurs amans,
> Dont l'amour fut ingrate et la constance vaine,
> Et qu'au théatre même on suffriroit à peine? (IV.2)

In Corneille's Veuve, Geron, mocking Florange's way of conversing (this last is held up to be the rich and rather foolish provincial. He never appears.), says of him: "Il dit ce qu'il a leu" (I.4.1. 274). In the same author's Galerie du Palais, Lysandre makes a comment on the kind of love-making to which most of these characters are used:

> [. . .] Le style d'un sonnet
> Est fort extravagant dedans un cabinet;
> Il y faut bien louer la beauté qu'on adore,
> Sans mépriser Vénus, sans médire de Flore,
> Sans que l'éclat des lis, des roses, d'un beau jour,
> Ait rien à démêler avecque notre amour.
> O pauvre comédie, objet de tant de veines,
> Si tu n'es qu'un portrait des actions humaines,
> On te tire souvent sur un original
> A qui, pour dire vrai, tu ressembles fort mal! (I.7.11. 167-176)

A similar instance occurs, once again, in La Veuve, where Alcidon, who is actually Philiste's rival, accuses the latter of pretending to help him, Alcidon, obtain his sister's hand, when he actually knew of this sister's betrothal to Florage. He knows this is untrue, since the nurse, with whom he has concocted this story in an effort to force Philiste into a duel, specifically told him Geron had contrived the liaison in secret. It is a story, known by the spectator to be false. Alcidon brings the illusory nature of this entire incident even further into the open when he likens his actions to those of a stage character:

> Comme alors qu'au Théâtre on nous fait voir Melite,
> Le discours de Cloris quand Philandre la quitte,
> Ce qu'elle dit de luy, je le dis de ta soeur,
> Et je la veux traiter avec mesme douceur.
> (III.3.11. 955-958. [See *Mélite*, III.5])

Or as Clorimand comments in Mareschal's *Railleur*, in response to the "poet" Lizante's laments over his suffering in the name of love: he will rejoice in it, says he; responds the mocker:

> Les poëtes, les amans, quand l'ardeur les convie,
> Meurent tous, et jamais ils ne perdent la vie.
> (III.3. p. 175)

In each of these cases the spectator's attention is brought directly to notice that these characters are playing on a stage in front of them, to be aware that the language they are using does not belong to real creatures: or, to be more precise, that "real" characters (the ones who make the comments) are playing alongside stage characters.

Some of these plays contain well-known dialogues, almost all use *stances*, and all contain laments and other long monologues. The most famous dialogue is probably that of Philene and Sylvie in Mairet's *Sylvie* (I.3), probably composed by Mairet himself, but which was published apart from the play. The same author's *Sylvanire* contains a similar dialogue (III.7.11. 1296-1327), although considerably shorter than the other. The use of stichomythia, of echo (where the last syllable or two of the last word in a line is repeated as an echo answering the speaker, usually in a contrary sense to the one he would like to hear -- Thomas Corneille later made fun of the device in his *Berger extravagant* [1652], I.5), and other like techniques, was usual. They obviously keep the spectator aware that he is watching something essentially unreal. Corneille (Pierre) in his Examen of Clitandre (1660) comments on these literary devices popular at the time of the production of all these plays:

> Les monologues sont trop longs, et fréquents en cette pièce [Clitandre]; c'était une beauté en ce temps-là, les comédiens les souhaitoient, et croyoient y paroître avec plus d'avantage. (p. 118)

Whether they wanted them or not, the authors are not above making a mockery of the actor's noble speech. In Les Occasions perdues, following Clorimand's speech-making (III.2), Lysis proceeds to a commentary on his "caquets:"

> Qu'une étrange manie a troublé sa pensée!
> C'est bien là se flatter d'une amour insensée.
> Combien de longues nuits il passe à s'abuser
> D'une vaine recherche, et qu'il dut mépriser!
> Il l'adore, il la croit de mille attraits pourvue,
> L'élève jusqu'au ciel, et ne l'a jamais vue.
> O la parfaite amour que l'amour des laquais!
> Ils ne s'amusent point à de si longs caquets;
> Jamais les envieux sur leurs desseins ne mordent:
> Deux mots ruinent tout, ou deux mots les accordent;
> Sans autres complimens, tel de telle a joui,
> Qui n'avoit dit encor que le seul mot d'oui.

In Mairet's Sylvanire, the heroine comes very close to mocking her own eloquence: as she "dies" (IV.4), she states her love for Aglante and her desire to marry him, at not inconsiderable length, in view of her position (1659-1697), and pauses in the midst of this lament to cry out:

> O mort! n'acheve pas que je n'aye achevé. (l. 1686)

Here the monologue's needlessness (in terms of action) is made as clear as it will be again a little later, when Tirinte delays opening the tomb in order to rhapsodize:

> O précieux tombeau, qui dedans ta closture
> Gardes comme en depost l'honneur de la Nature,

> Fidelle gardien de la gloire de l'Amour.

Not unnaturally, considering that what they are doing is strictly illegal, his friend Alciron is rather annoyed by this:

> Tirinte despeschons avant qu'il soit plus jour,
> J'ay besoin de ta main, et non pas de ta langue,
> Une autre une autre fois tu feras ta harangue.
> (V.2.11. 2112-2117)

Here language is openly seen as a hindrance to the action. It is clearly existing purely for its own sake, and actually becomes an element quite distinct from the action being pursued concurrently on the stage. It is a showcase for the actor, as an actor, and is presumably interpreted as such, if we can take Corneille's comment in its fullest sense (indeed, Molière still remarks on the delivery of certain actors who break the _vraisemblance_ of the play).

Not far removed from this mockery of the language itself, is the mockery of its creations. So certain conventional creations are recognized as existing only for the stage, and for the _amusement_ of the spectators. As Corneille remarks in his _Examen_ of _L'Illusion_ (1660) of the Matamore whom he there placed upon the stage:

> Il y en a mesme un [character] qui n'a d'estre que dans l'imagination, inventé exprés pour faire rire, et dont il ne se trouve point d'original parmy les hommes. C'est un Capitan que soustient assez son caractere de fanfaron, pour me permettre de croire qu'on en trouvera peu dans quelque Langue que ce soit qui s'en acquitent mieux. (p. 123)

The fanfaron, and others like him, are almost always presented by the other characters as frauds. In Gougenot's _Comédie des Comédiens_, where the levels of illusion are particularly confused, Bellerose remarks on the Capitaine (who, here, is supposedly an actor like the rest):

> [. . .] tant il y a que cest hipocondriaque croit
> sur peine de la vie que nous l'estimions tel qu'il
> se repute estre.[39]

We have already seen the example in Mareschal's Le Railleur, whose La Dupré remarks on the "vain Capitain" as though he were in a different reality from her own:

> Est-ce un de ceux qu'on doit jouer à ces jours gras?
> Rodomont, Scanderberg, Fracasse, ou Taillebras?
> (II.2. p. 163)

We already know that Mareschal's captain is the last named of these. This "apparent illusion" (if I may use this term to refer to conventions which are seemingly already obviously false to the spectator because of their theatrical nature) goes beyond character. If a certain language and bearing (on the part of the actor) defines characters such as the captain, the doctor, the valet, if actors such as Gaultier and Gros Guillaume are clearly stage creatures, this also goes for the genre itself and the theme. In Rotrou's Diane, Diane (disguised as Célirée) is trying to obtain from Lysimant the admission that he still loves Diane rather than Orante, and that he is marrying the latter only because his father wants him to marry someone with wealth. She suggests to him that Diane no longer loves him:

> Le changement du sort peut changer ses esprits,
> Et d'une ardente amour faire un lache mépris.

In response to this comment, Lysimant can only sigh:

> Hélas! quel changement arrive à des bergères? (I., 9)

The apparent meaning that she can never be in a material position where his father would allow him to marry her, is confused with an ironic comment on the nature of the pastoral which we may assume to have been deliberate on the part of Rotrou, since he delights in such remarks. The irony is increased here, because her material condition is indeed destined to change.

We have already suggested that the stage representation of madness is the symbol of a major theme. It, too, however is also a recognized opportunity for the author and actor to delight his audience for reasons quite external to the demands of action. In his Examen to _Melite_ (1660), Corneille again remarks:

> La folie d'Eraste n'est pas de meilleure trempe. Je la condamnois deslors en mon ame; mais comme c'estoit un ornement de Theatre qui ne manquoit jamais de plaire, et se faisoit souvent admirer, j'affectay volontiers ces grands egaremens, [. . .] (p. 137)

These are all common situations where the language which creates _genre_, character or theme, is held up to ridicule. Many more examples are given by Garapon,[40] when he shows how humorous language is an opportunity for the actor to show his virtuosity: it thus breaks, totally, the illusion, for the actor either steps out of his role, or that role is presented as a deceit. Obvious examples are the galimatias of Bruscambille and the chansons of Gaultier-Garguille, as well as the _Galimatias_ of Deroziers.[41] If these extremes are more-or-less absent from the tragi-comedy of the period we are studying,[42] the equally unrealistic and conventional speech of set characters and themes is not; and while this last is less humorous than the devices studied by Garapon, it is equally able to prevent "suspension of disbelief."

Each of the situations mentioned really breaks the illusion because it shows the actor at work. Similar is the effect of the _mise en scène_, for no effort, or very little, is made to achieve _vraisemblance_.[43] In Corneille's _Galerie du Palais_, a curtain is drawn aside and we see appear "le libraire, la lingère, et le mercier chacun dans sa boutique" (I.4). This is repeated later in the play (IV.12 and 13). Once again, Corneille makes a comment on this in his later Examen:

> J'ai donc pris ce titre de la Galerie du Palais, parce que la promesse de ce spectacle extraordinaire et agréable pour sa naïveté, devait exciter vraisemblablement la curiosité des auditeurs; et ç'a été pour leur plaire plus d'une fois, que j'ai fait paraître ce même spectacle à la fin du quatrième acte, où il est entièrement inutile [. . .] (II. 12)

In La Place royalle his efforts to present another attractive and pleasing decor result in a similar conflict between action (here in a character) and the set. We read in the Examen that it was too unlikely that Angelique would grieve in the street over her precipitous agreement to accept a marriage she does not want (III.5), and so he had decided rather to place her in her boudoir so that the audience could see her through the window, in a more natural manner although the scene itself is made obviously illusory:

> I'ay mieux aimé rompre la liaison des Scenes, & l'vnité de lieu qui se trouue assez exacte en ce Poëme, à cela prés, afin de la faire soupirer dans son cabinet auec plus de bienseance pour elle, & plus de seureté pour l'entretien d'Alidor. (p. 114)

The set, in fact, often seems to take over from the text. We have already seen the manner in which Mairet, in Les Galanteries du Duc d'Ossone, makes use of a moving wall to reveal the various bedrooms which are necessary to give meaning to the text. L'Illusion comique relies on a similar technique, and how many of Mahelot's directions call for a curtain to be drawn aside and reveal another part of the scenery? In his instructions for La Bague de l'Oubly, we read:

> A costé du jardin et du palais, il faut un eschaffaut tendu de noir qui soit caché; il s'ouvre au cinquiesme acte, a la premiere scene.

The instructions for *Ligdamon et Lidias* request that even more scenery be suddenly revealed:

> [. . .] A l'autre costé, il faut une prison, sous la prison un antre d'ou sort des lions, il faut des chaisnes; et, contre la prison, il faut aussy un temple ou autel; une barriere garnie de ballustres, et le tout caché. (pp. 69-70)

Du Ryer's *Arétaphile* needs "un palais caché" (p. 77), Durval's *Travaux d'Ulysse*, "un enfer caché" (p. 83), Rayssiguier's *Calirie* requires "une belle salle" which is kept concealed until the last act (p. 103), Mairet's *Sylvie* calls for "un autel: qui ne paroissent qu'au cinquiesme acte" (p. 90). The instructions for Durval's *Agarite* show a certain similarity to the requirements of Mairet's *Ossone*:

> Au milieu du theatre, il faut une chambre garnie d'un superbe lict, lequel se ferme et ouvre quand il en est besoing. (p. 80)

Auvray, in his *Dorinde*, makes an interesting *rapport* between set, action and theme: Sigismon is to be rescued from the tower in which he is a prisoner by climbing down a rope to a boat where his *confident*, Ardilan, is awaiting him; they will then pursue Sigismon's mistress, Dorinde:

Ard.: Sus, attachez la corde, & sans perdre de temps
Allons chercher ailleurs des Astres plus constans.
Sig.: Ie suis prest, la voicy;* ie vay quoy qu'il auienne
Mettre au bout d'vne corde & ta vie & la mienne;
Mes yeux sous cet habit ne me connoissent plus.
Ard.: Ne nous amusons point de discours superflus
Sig.: Pour sortir aisement la Tour est vn peu droite,
Cette corde assez rude, & la fenestre étroite;

*Il attache la corde à la fenestre de la tour pour en descendre.

*Dorinde sans mentir ie serois sans soucy
Si nos liens estoient aussi forts que ceux-cy.
Ard.: Tenez-vous ferme aux noeux, mon bateau se recule;
Il faut en cét endroit auoir vn bras d'Hercule:
Sig.: Dépesche, que mes mains toutes pleines de feux
Ne brûlent cette corde auecque tous ses noeux.
Est-il bien?
Ard.: Descendez.
Sig.: I'ay pensé lacher prise (IV.4)

*Descendant & tenant la corde.

Here are made apparent several of the devices already mentioned: the metaphor of the bonds of love, is made visible in the cord which burns his hands, the tower itself may represent the obstacles he must overcome before he may finally approach his beloved. Even the theme of the fusion of souls is brought in. At the same time, the actor deliberately calls the spectator's close attention to the set, to the form of the tower and its window, to the water which is supposedly carrying Ardilan's boat away from the walls, despite his efforts to hold it.

For a scene depending entirely on movement, we cannot do better than to take that of the false execution in Mareschal's Cour bergere (IV.6-8. pp. 88-96), where the author's stage directions control the action. The evil Cecropie has managed to persuade her son, Amphyale, to "execute" Pamele in order to frighten her sister, Phyloclée, into marrying him:

> Pamele paroit, les mains liées, les yeux bandez, la gorge nuë, & vn Bourreau derriere elle, qui tient vn coutelas à la main, & suit deux hommes qui menent cette Princesse au lieu du supplice, qui sera dans vn lieu éleué au fonds du theatre, & qui se découurira, la tapisserie estant leuée.

The spectator (and Phyloclée) then sees the executioner about to let his arm drop as the "tapisserie" is allowed to fall. Phyloclée faints, but is conscious once again in time to see the curtain go up for her to see "le corps de Pamele tout ensanglantée, & la teste dans vn bassin sur vne table." She had in fact been woken by the weight of her real lover, Pyrocle, present in the guise of an Amazon maiden, who fainted on top of her, in accordance with Mareschal's directions. The scene comes to a no less extraordinary end: first Crecropie appears on "vne platte forme dv Chateau;" then Amphyale, who is now lying wounded, gets up, grabs his sword and runs to the platform "pour s'y tuer deuant elle." Fate is now enjoying itself:

> Il se tuë; & Cecropie reculant de peur, tombe de la platte forme en bas, sur le theatre.

All this movement forms a kind of backdrop to the lamenting of Amphyale, to the curses of Cecropie, and to the fears of Phyloclée and Pyrocle. It also puts an end to the sub-plot with the deaths of Cecropie and her son.

One could break down all these techniques as much as one wished: the end result would be a rather dull list which would not show us too well how the spectator reacts to an entire play. Since we have already seen examples of the relationship between language and set in the two plays previously examined, let us now briefly look at a play where an emphasis is laid on the irony of an opposition between reality and fantasy: Corneille's Melite, where this irony seems restricted almost entirely to the language.

At the outset of the play, Tirsis responds to Eraste's laments about his unrequited love for Melite with no little cynicism on the whole question of love:

> Ces visages d'esclat sont bons à cajoler,
> C'est-là qu'un jeune oiseau doit s'apprendre à parler,
> J'ayme à remplir de feux ma bouche en leur presence,
> La mode nous oblige à ceste complaisance,
> Tous ces discours de livre alors sont de saison,
> Il faut feindre du mal, demander guerison. (I.1.11. 59-64)

As Van Roosbroeck has noted,[44] this line makes comical the characters of Eraste and Philandre. It does so because it makes evident the purely literary nature of their protestations of love, it throws doubt on their reality; they do not adapt to "life" but mouth endlessly the phrases of précieux romance. To the spectator they become simply images impressed on a situation. At this point Tirsis appears as the destroyer of a fantasy Eraste and Philandre try to create for themselves and for the spectator. He is the foil for the unreality of their characters. What Van Roosbroeck does not mention, however, is that Tirsis, a little later, is himself on the verge of accepting this fantasy when he speaks with Melite (II.8; V.4) in terms approaching preciosity, although he continually appears to back away from it. He is always on the point of accepting a character which he has already reduced for the spectator to the laughable; he seems to fluctuate between reality and illusion. As far as Eraste and Philandre are concerned, there is, at least until after the former's confession in his madness, little doubt; but as regards Tirsis the case is more difficult. His stage character is never quite destroyed, and yet neither is it completely assured, and it appears that the nature of the spectator's attention will be quite changeable.

After being mocked by Tirsis, Eraste goes off to see Melite, who will have more fun at his expense. He protests his love for her, and she, who has also just echoed Tirsis's cynicism, mocks his love, but in his own terms:

> Er.: Vostre divin aspect suspendant mes douleurs
> Mon visage du vostre emprunte les couleurs.
> Me.: Faites mieux, pour finir vos maux et vostre flamme
> Empruntez tout d'un temps les froideurs de mon ame.
> (I.2.11. 167-170)

The language seems to be bent inward upon itself, revealing an inner coherence and self-sufficiency which makes a mockery of its intended significance. Refusing Eraste's fantasy, Melite appears to accept the terms of that fantasy, only to refute them. The language is detached from the reality it supposedly represents, its own metaphors appear to keep it away from its intended meaning. In a later scene (I.4) this is apparently no longer true: Cloris seems to accept Philandre's game. Yet even there the detachment of language from any reality is subsequently made clear by the easy separation of these two lovers: the love which the language supposedly reveals is in fact absent. The language of preciosity, as shown here, never meets its supposed meaning, it is always above it, playing with it. The mockery becomes at times more direct. In the scene between Philandre and Cloris that we have just mentioned, Cloris remarks of his preciosity:

> A travers tes discours si remplis d'artifice
> Je descouvre le but de ton intention.

The scene is further mocked by the subsequent arrival of Tirsis, whose banter reduces the precious sentiments just expressed to the meaning they have constantly been skirting. He happens to come on stage as they kiss, and he "excuses" the importunacy of his arrival:

> Vous feries mieux un tiers, que d'en accepter un. (I.5.1. 340)

Their fantasy is suddenly joined to the reality that lies beneath it, and is thus destroyed. This places Cloris and Philandre in their proper perspective _vis à vis_ the spectator, for she accepts this mocking destruction with small protest, while Philandre, on the contrary, attempts to continue the fantasy. This is suitably mocked by the parting shot of Tirsis, as he says to the lover:

> Sa nuit [of marriage] est bien plustost ce que vous attendez,
> Pour vous recompenser du temps que vous perdez.
> (I.5.11. 375-376)

In the 1660 edition of the play, Corneille considerably decreases this irony, by suppressing the risqué nature of these lines, and thus offering less opposition to the preciosity of the remainder.. We might also notice, in passing, how Schelandre's Tyr et Sidon of 1628, puts considerably more emphasis on this type of irony (see above pp. 149-150) than did the more even-toned tragedy of 1608. It appears to be only during this period between Hardy and the Corneille of Horace that fluctuation is stressed in the regular theatre, revealing perhaps the close connection between this type of theatre and the more popular farce and sottie.

In Mélite the opposition between reality and literary fantasy appears to become a principal theme. Eraste, jealous of Tirsis's apparent success with Melite, decides that if he cannot have her, then neither can his rival. With this in mind, he writes letters, supposedly from her, to Philandre, relying on the latter to show them to Tirsis. Such indeed is the case, and Tirsis is left lamenting her lack of fidelity. He has, however, his doubts as to the truth of these letters, thinking they are perhaps only a literary device:

> Caractères trompeurs vous me contez des fables.
> (III.3.1. 972)

For the present he accepts them, and decides to retreat to "quelque lieu desert" (1001) and, finally, to die. If this were to happen it would signify the death of the reality he represents; the fantasy of preciosity, the deceit of literature in the letters would win. This is not what occurs. As we know, the letters are defeated (by another illusion, it is true: that of madness. But madness is a visible, hence more "real" illusion), as is the fantasy of preciosity. Cloris dismisses Philandre on account of his infidelity towards her, and in reply to his continued cooing, tells him:

> Laisse là desormais ces petits mots de flame,
> Et par ces faux temoings d'un feu mal allumé
> Ne me reproche plus que je t'ay trop aymé. (V.3.11. 1748-1750)

For their part, Tirsis and Melite decide to do the same; says the former:

> Ne parlons plus d'ennuys, de tourmens, de tristesses,
> Et changeons en baisers ces traits d'oeil langoureux,
> Qui ne font qu'irriter nos desirs amoureux.
> [. . .]
> Il faut un aliment plus solide à nos flames
> Par où nous unissions nos bouches et nos ames.
> (V.4.11. 1792-1804)

In La Place royalle this opposition becomes even stronger, for we have a struggle between two characters, Alidor and Angelique, the first of whom is ever seeking a firm freedom in reality, while the other seeks to trap him in the illusions of language: in her love. At the end of the play, it is clear that he has succeeded:

> Ie vis dorenauant puis que ie vis à moy,
> Et quelques doux assauts qu'vn autre objet me liure,
> C'est de moy seulement que ie prendray la loy.
> (V.8.11. 1579-1581)

Angelique, meanwhile, who has throughout accepted the précieux attitude, the feint, which allowed her to be misled by Alidor in the first place, finally accepts the loss of freedom she has been seeking all along: whether she accepts her prison, as Philis calls her retiring to a convent (V.7.1. 1549), for the sake of Alidor or for that of God comes to the same thing as far as her personal liberty is concerned. The axis of the play is the alternation between an interior struggle (Alidor's efforts to attain personal freedom which always conflict with his real love for Angelique) and the external trappings of the theatre: letters, abduction, and so on, between the setting (the Palais royalle) and the real action, which already needs no setting.

In a sense this is present in all these plays. The spectator is not intended to believe in the lighthearted games that are being performed, he is not expected to identify with these nymphs and shepherds: they are a literary and theatrical game. The real intent seems to be rather in this dialectic of the elements. Scudéry seems to be aware of this when he suggests in its Au lecteur that Le Prince déguisé, "cette Peinture parlante," may have owed its success no more to its poetry, the effects present in the text, than to:

> Le superbe appareil de la Scene, la face du Theatre, qui change cinq ou six fois entierement, à la representation de ce Poëme, la magnificence des habits, l'excellence des Comediens, de qui l'action farde les paroles, & la voix qui n'est qu'vn son qui meurt en naissant [. . .]

The variable nature of love, that most popular of superficial themes, the continual playing of the characters with one another, the everlasting deceptions (which may be deliberate, as Alcidon and the nurse in La Veuve or Fernant in Les Folies de Cardenio, or simply from emotion, as Philiste and Clarice in La Veuve), the physical disguises, the ease with which the lovers change the object of their love, the use of literary irony, of irony in the set and the actor's manner, it is here that the true theme of these plays seems to lie. This is why the tone of the denouement may well appear to bely that of the rest if we fail to see what lies behind the action of the surface. So, at the end of La Diane, the peasant Sylvian, who has been excluded from the happiness of the others by the denial of the hand of the heroine, bitterly remarks:

> Puisque tout est contraire à ta persévérance,
> Va dans un broc de vin noyer ton espérance,
> Malheureux Sylvian, et venge sur les plats
> La perte que tu fais de ses rares appas.

The "humour" of this comment scarcely agrees with the sentiment expressed. A similar bitterness is to be found at the end of Corneille's Suivante, when Amarante laments for reasons similar to those of Sylvian. At the end of Melite, the defeated nurse swears she will get her revenge, so too does the "vanquished" Erphore, servant to the evil Lypas of Mairet's Illustre corsaire.

This kind of "open" ending is by no means rare, indeed the multiple marriages that so often conclude these plays are a distinctly theatrical means of avoiding the problem, and leave the questions regarding the uncertainty of the human condition, the unreliability of human perception, and so on, which are raised within the play, quite unanswered. The tragi-comedies and comedies of this period do not attempt an answer to a moral problem, indeed they are rarely concerned with, as Gaiffe puts it,[45] "la peinture des moeurs et [. . .] l'analyse psychologique." Their concerns are entirely more general.

NOTES

[1] Published by Austin Gill in 1957 (see Bibliography). All references to plays will be given by line where possible (and volume if necessary) from the editions given in the Bibliography (Part I). In the case of *Mélite*, *Clitandre*, *La Veuve*, *La Place royalle*, *l'Illusion comique*, references will be to the single editions. References to Rotrou are to the edition of Viollet-le-Duc, except for the seven plays contained in the Garnier edition (ed. Hémon: *Les Sosies*, *Laure persecutée*, *La Soeur*, *Saint-Genest*, *Don Bernard de Cabrère*, *Venceslas*, *Cosroès*), since this last is more easily found.

[2] Cf. Corneille, *La Galerie du Palais*, IV.12.11. 1397-1398. *Le mercier* to *la lingère*:

> Là, là, criez bien haut, faites bien l'étourdie,
> Et puis on vous jouera dedans la comédie.

[3] Cf. p. 97 below: Mareschal, *Le Railleur*, V.6.

[4] *Op. cit.*, xxv.

[5] Baro, before *Clorise*. Quoted by Marsan, *La Pastorale dramatique*, 345, n.I.

[6] In Edouard Fournier, éd., *Le Théâtre français au XVIe. et au XVIIe. siècle* (Paris: Garnier, n.d.), II. 217-279.

[7] v. Henry Carrington Lancaster, éd., *Le Mémoire de Mahelot, Laurent* [. . .] (Paris: Champion, 1920), 90-91:

Il faut une nuict au cinquiesme acte, un tonnerre, des eclairs, des socisons ["espèce de fusée dont on se servait pour les feux d'artifice" (editor's note, p. 76)], des dards, des houlettes et un miroir enchanté, (*Mahelot*, 91).

[8] I quote part of the passage from *La Madonte*, since the play is not easily consulted:

> L'Echo que l'on entend dans ces deux fortes tours
> N'a pas dit ce matin vn mot de ses amours,
> Toutes les fleurs encore ont la teste baissee
> Le soucy seulement entretient la pensee,
> S'étonnant toutes deux de ce que mon Soleil
> Semble perdre auiourd'huy le soin de son reueil,
> I'entens fort peu de bruit, le Zephir a son aise
> Baise toutes les fleurs pour eteindre sa braise,
> Il semble entretenir les eaux de leur fraicheur
> Les Oeillets de leur feu, les lys de leur blancheur,
> Et leur rebellion qui le rend plus superbe

> Le contraint quelquefois à les coucher sur l'herbe;
> Ces ruisseaux de cristal, & ces veines d'argent
> Ne coulent qu'a regret, & d'vn pas negligent [. . .]

It is hardly necessary to remark on the erotic nature of this admiration; what is of significance is that the stage setting becomes a kind of springboard for the thoughts of Damon, although one supposes the set as envisaged by the lover to be somewhat imaginary (not entirely: Mahelot calls for "un beau jardin" and "des rossignols" [*Mémoire*, p. 70]). The actor transposes the visual into a realm of the imaginary existing only in the mind and in the language which reflects it.

[9] v. "A Commonplace in Corneille's Mélite: the Madness of Eraste," *Mod. Phil.*, XVII, 3 (July 1919), 29-37.

[10] *Op. cit.*, 30.

[11] I.1. p. 3. A little later he adds (I.3. p. 16): "J'adore le prison, & la main qui me tue."

[12] Scudéry, *Ligdamon et Lydias, Ou la ressemblance. Tragi-comédie* (Paris: Targa, 1631), I.1. p. 10. It may be as well here to say something of the important words *hypocondriaque* and *mélancolie*, since their meaning in the seventeenth century was not what it is today. According to Richelet in 1702 (v. bibl.), the word "hipocondriaque" meant "bizarre, foux, capricieux" (*Dictionnaire*, 418). Of "mélancolie," Marty-Laveaux (Corneille, XII, 78) says: "Le mot n'a aujourd'hui rien de sinistre; il exprime d'ordinaire une douce et aimable tristesse, dans laquelle on se complaît; il n'en était pas de même au dix-septième siècle. Cette expression désignait alors le chagrin le plus invétéré, le plus profond, et *mélancolique* était un synonyme fort rapproché d'*atrabilaire*." Indeed, Richelet gives for *atrabilaire* only the word "melancolique" (p. 87), and of this last explains (p. 500): "Espece de délire sans fievre, accompagné de crainte & de chagrin sans raison aparente à cause que le chagrin & le jugement sont blessez par l'abondance d'une bile noire & brulée. Tristesse." Since the pastoral hero's complaint of *mélancolie* is a perennial one, it is as well to be aware that it means considerably more than mere sadness.

[13] Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1961), 44-46.

[14] Foucault (*op. cit.*, Pt. II, Ch. II, 253-303) quotes Paul Zacchias, *Quaestiones medico-legales* [. . .], 2 vols. (Avignon, 1660-1661), and Ysbrand van Diemerbroek, *Disputationes praticae, de morbis capitis*, in *Opera anatomica et medica* (Utrecht, 1685) who both make this observation from a medical standpoint about this time.

[15] Of Jean de la Taille's *Saül le furieux*.

[16] Of Jean de Schélandre's *Tyr et Sidon ou les funestes amours de*

Belcar et Meliane. Tragédie. [1608] (v. bibl.)

[17] *Op. cit.*, 48-49.

[18] In Edouard Fournier, *op. cit.*, II. 146-208.

[19] *Op. cit.*, 53.

[20] Foucault, *op. cit.*, 179.

[21] E.g., Cardenio's attack on the *licentié* in Pichou's *Les Folies de Cardenio*, IV.2. But he and the barber quickly recover and go after Cardenio to see if they can help.

[22] See Foucault, *op. cit.*, Pt. II, Ch. III, 318-359. He cites as authority two works in particular with regard to this link. First Jean Liébaut, *Trois livres sur les maladies des femmes* (Paris, 1649), which was first published in French in 1582, translated from Liébaut's Latin, in turn an adaptation of Giovanni Marinelli's work of 1563: the idea has already deep and wide roots. The second work is interesting for its title alone, which right away connects love and melancholy: Jacques Ferrand, *De la maladie d'amour ou mélancolie érotique* (Paris: D. Moreau, 1623), which also seems to have had a prior edition, in a somewhat different form in 1610.

[23] Cf also: Thélame's lament for Sylvie in Mairet's *Sylvie*:

> Car n'ayant eu tous deux qu'une ame iusqu'icy,
> L'vn mort, l'autre deuroit cesser de viure aussi.
> (.2.11. 1963-1964)

Artenice to Alcidor in Racan's *Les Bergeries*, after she regains consciousness by the river (III.4. p. 85):

> Hélas! gardez-vous bien d'advancer vostre mort:
> Je mourrois avec vous; nos amoureuses flames
> Font dans un mesme corps respirer nos deux ames.

In Mairet's *Athenaïs* still, as Theodose says to Paulin of Athenaïs:

> En ce cruel instant qu'elle s'est éloignée:
> Alors auec douleur, i'ay senty que mon coeur
> S'est détaché de moy pour suiure son vainqueur. (I.5. p. 22)

[24] v. for the first: J. D. Hubert, *Molière and the Comedy of Intellect* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1962), 162-188; and for the second: Jacqueline Van Baelen, *Rotrou. Le héros tragique et le révolte* (Paris: Nizet, 1965), 33-37. Note the following exclamation of Hercule after he has put on the poisoned robe:

> Moi-mesme je m'ignore en ce triste accident [. . .] (IV.1.)

[25] Since any play could have been used as an example, I have deliberately chosen two little known plays, because it seemed a useful opportunity to shed on them some of the critical light usually reserved for better known plays.

[26] See above p. 91 , n.8 -- *La Madonte*, *Sylvie*, and so on.

[27] l'abbé d'Aubignac, *La Pratique du théâtre*. éd. Pierre Martino (Alger: Carbonel; Paris: Champion, 1927), 104.

[28] *Op. cit.*, 333-334.

[29] See, for example, *Sylvie*, *Argénis et Poliarque*, *La Cour Bergère*.

[30] S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Le Théâtre du Marais*. 2 vols. (Paris: Nizet, 1954). Speaking of the rebuilding of the Marais in 1644, the author points out that the new theatre had this second stage (I.109-110, and plate X, 113), and observes that the only novel aspect of this is that her discoveries enable us to know its dimensions for the first time: "Il est vrai que plusieurs documents se rapportant au théatre en France avaient déjà signalé 'un théâtre et un petit théâtre' mais ils n'avaient jamais été dessinés parce que les données relatives à leur disposition et à leurs mesures étaient trop incomplètes." (I.114) In her later work, *L'Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre français à Paris de 1600 à 1673* (Paris: Nizet, 1960), she adds: "Mahelot s'est servi plusieurs fois de la seconde scène, lorsqu'il fallait imiter le ciel, la lune, les étoiles ou faire mouvoir les planètes. C'est sur ce deuxième plateau qu'il installait les machines nécessaires pour produire ces effets," (p. 53). If it is true that the workings of these *machines* were quite visible, then the illusion is all the less concealed, for there can be no doubt that the upper stage was not simply used to hold devices: these machines are representational. If we turn again to Mahelot for but a single example, his description of the set for Durval's *Travaux d'Ulysse* (played in 1630 according to Lancaster [*History*, I.2, 512]) where he says:

> Au milieu du théâtre il faut un enfer caché et les mesmes tourmens d'enfer. Au dessus de l'enfer, le ciel d'Appolon, et au dessus d'Appolon, le ciel de Jupiter [. . .] (*Op. cit.*, 83.)

[31] That all this staging was quite possible is evidenced, among others, by Mahelot and Nicola Sabbattini, in his *Pratique pour fabriquer scènes et machines de théâtre* [. . .], éd. Louis Jouvet (Neuchâtel: Ides et Calendes, 1942), who gives countless ways of achieving the various effects demanded in these and like plays. Although this work was published in Italy in 1638, and was presumably without direct effect in France until the arrival of Torelli in 1645, we may assume that most of the work echoed practice with the machines available: we need only look at the staging of the *ballets de cour* in France years before. We may legitimately, I think, apply what Bjurström has said of Torelli's efforts to this theatre of 10-15 years before, if we bear in mind that the level of sophistication was probably much lower:

Torelli tried to relieve this effect [of deep perspective created by stage scenery. (A factor as true in Paris in the early 1630's as in the Venice of the early 1640's of which Bjurström is speaking)] by creating a more complicated *organization of space* with variations between the longitudinal and lateral axes, by making the *rhythm* produced by alternating the architectural and landscape sets give the visual effect of the production an almost musical time factor (*op. cit.*, 103).

The important aspect of this for us, is that the visual effects of the stage are here viewed as an entity separate from, if connected to, the text and the movement of the actors within that set.

[32] See also, later, when Clidamant promises to *persuade* Silvie to love Ligdamon:

> [. . .] ma parole engagée
> Promet absoluement de la rendre changée (II.3. p. 46)

[33] It is true that Mahelot mentions neither the need for dawn nor birds (*op. cit.*,69-70), but this does not mean too much, since he often omits, quite unsystematically (see Lancaster's Introduction, 33), this kind of effect from his instructions, although they are manifestly needed in the play. Elsewhere he uses "rossignols" as props, and calls for dawns. But actually, this last would be an even more unnecessary thing to mention, since the necessary lighting (see Sabbattini, *op. cit.*, 168-169) would, in any case, be readily available at the theatre. As another example of similar demands being made on the set, let us glance at Rotrou's *Occasions perdues*, where the queen, as she lays down to sleep, comments on the birds, and leads Cléonte into praises of the beauty of the nature around them.

> Je crois qu'ils [the birds] n'ont appris ces amoureux accents
> Qu'à dessein d'en pouvoir entretenir vos sens,
> Que vous seule empêchez ces ruisseaux de se taire,
> Que les fleurs de ces lieux y naissent pour vous plaire,
> Et que ces doux zéphirs y viennent sans dessein
> Que de vous y baiser les cheveux et le sein. (I.1)
> (cf. p. 171, n.8)

[34] Cf. also, at a more serious point in the play, Amerine's comment as she tries to persuade Ligdamon of her love:

> Sçache que i'ay gardé ton portrait dans le coeur,
> Ouure moy l'estomach, tu verras ta peinture
> Qu'Amour pour mon malheur sçauant en portraiture
> Y graua tellement qu'il te fait apparoir
> Aussi bien là dedans comme dans vn miroir. (V.2. p. 118)

[35] If there is a reference here to Auvray's *Dorinde* (published, like *Ligdamon et Lidias*, in 1631, and also known as *La Prise de Marsilly* [see *Mahelot*, 81-82, and the identification made by Lancaster, 81, n.3]), there would again be a break in the illusion.

[36] For remarks on how the set often echoes the character's emotions as they appear through the language, see above, pp. 88 ff. and below, pp. 160 ff. The comments of the characters in the present play have been no less connected with this. Ligdamon had asked Aegide to set his soul free (II.1. p. 32); Silvie has blamed herself for her harsh treatment of "vne ame prisonniere" and commented that if Ligdamon returned he would see her

> [. . .] languir en prison comme toy dans les fers.
> (III.2. p. 60)

[37] In Scarron's *Romant comique*, Ragotin argues, in an effort to persuade the comedians to perform his story, which they claim is too ridiculous and too hard to stage:

> [. . .] si l'on doit juger des choses par l'effect qu'elles font dans l'esprit, toutes les fois que j'ay veu jouer Pirame et Thisbé, je n'ay pas esté tant touché de la mort de Pirame qu'effrayé du lion. (In *Romanciers du XVIIe. siècle*, éd. Antoine Adam [Paris: Gallimard, "Pléiade," 1958], 570).

This is suggested as absurd, and one may suppose it to be because the lions were not real but actors in suitable skins and so scarcely frightening. Indeed, Ragotin himself has just said, for example, "j'ay fait autrefois le chien de Tobie."

[38] Gaston Baty, *Rideau baissé*, 219.

[39] See *Ancien théâtre français* (Paris: Jannet, 1856), IX, 328.

[40] See *La fantaisie verbale et le comique dans le théâtre français du moyen âge à la fin du XVIIe. siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1957).

[41] In *Ancien théâtre français*, IX, 433-503. Three other plays contained in this volume are equally good examples: *La Comédie des proverbes*, *La comédie des chansons* and *La Comédie des comédies*.

[42] Garapon, *op. cit.*, 148.

[43] See above, pp. 76 - 97 and notes 30, 31, 33, 36.

[44] See "Preciosity in Corneille's Early Plays," *Philological Quarterly*, VI, I (Jan. 1927), 27.

[45] Fernand Gaiffe, *Le rire et la scène française* (Paris: Boivin, 1931), 89.

IV. THE THEATRE ON THE THEATRE

Estants imitateurs de toute la Nature,
Ils doiuent auoir peints tous les Etres diuers,
Que la Nature estalle en ce grand Vniuers:
Et comme la terre est vn vaste eschaffaudage,
Où chacun dit son roole, & fait son personnage;
Pour la representer ils ont deu faire choix,
De ce qui peut seruir les Bergers & les Roys,
Afin que leur Theatre où tant de peuple abonde,
Puisse estre l'abbregé du Theatre du monde.
(Beys, Les illustres fous [1653], IV.5])

The emphasis placed on the problem of reality and illusion by these authors in the style of their plays, leads naturally and quite rapidly to plays whose subject is the theatre itself. It is clear that their reliance on the very theatricality of the theatre to achieve a certain _rapport_ with the spectator, their refusal to conceal what I suppose is the essence of the theatrical moment, brings them to examine that theatricality itself. As a result of this examination, perhaps under the impulse of a changing philosophical outlook, or that of an evolving social temper, perhaps simply as a result of the influence of the increasingly powerful critics, or merely in the course of experimenting, what is presently known as the "classical" theatre came to the fore.

The first two plays we shall examine briefly in this category are the two plays of Gougenot and Scudéry, called _La Comédie des comédiens_, the first play apparently in 1631 or 1632, the second in 1633, although they may have been closer together.[1] Despite their similarity in titles and in form, there is in fact an important difference between them. Both, of course, play on the reality and non-reality of the actors themselves; but in the case of Gougenot's play, they are presented as playing themselves, while in Scudéry's they are supposed to be pretending to play at being actors. In both plays, the first two acts are presented as a kind of prologue, but in Scudéry's there is in fact a prologue in which Mondory presents himself as the director of the troupe, before we are taken into a first play; which, in turn, leads us, in Act 3, to a second play, itself introduced by a prologue -- or rather, an "anti-prologue," since it consists of a dispute between the prologue and the argument, whose conclusion is that both serve no purpose. The play concludes with a further comment by Mondory/Blandimare to the spectators, which returns us finally to the second play, but where the second play itself rejoins the primary play. Gougenot's play is not as simple as it looks, however.

Bellerose walks onto the stage with an apology to the audience because, he says, two of his best actors have had an argument and come to blows, with the result that they cannot perform the play they had intended, and will have to produce something else. This is presented as a prologue; but it is a false prologue, for, as Bellerose "feint de vouloir rentrer" (p. 315), having asked for the audience's silence, Gaultier and Boniface appear on the stage still arguing and both with their arms in slings (p. 136). Bellerose comes back to try and stop them. Thus throughout the first two acts the actors are supposedly playing themselves. The action continues from this point, although it gradually changes its emphasis, for it eventually centres on the question of the troupe's organization and the problems they have to make suitable arrangements for the contracts of Guillaume and Turlupin who wish to be partners in the company and not actors "à gages."

Throughout these first two acts the emphasis is on an apology of the theatre, and is filled with comments on the purpose of the theatre, on the problems they must face and on the way they are treated. Bellerose tells the two disputers that they are losing time when they should be looking to the terms of the company's contract and drawing up a list of all the costumes and things which are necessary for the performances, since the theatre is "une figure racourcie du monde" (I.1. p. 325). Later he adds further to this definition when he says:

> [. . .] le theatre estant un abregé du monde, on y doit representer en abregé toutes les actions du monde; et c'est avec beaucoup de peine, d'autant que douze acteurs, pour le plus, dont la scène est composée, doivent en cinq ectes et en deux heures representer ce qui dans l'univers aura peut-estre succedé en vingt années à mille personnes; et, de plus, c'est que dans le theatre universel nul n'est attaché qu'à sa propre condition; mais, au comique, chacque acteur doit representer la qualité, la condition, la profession ou l'art que les subjets requièrent, et c'est ce qui fait le theatre bien different de l'opinion du vulgaire, et qui monstre l'estourdissement de ceux qui croyent, par le rapport d'un miroir et par l'applaudissement d'un vent populaire, que quelque beauté du corps que la nature leur a donnée ou quelque affeterie de langage qu'ils ont glenné au champ des Muses les rendent capables d'attirer sur eux les yeux et les oreilles d'une assistance composée bien souvent des plus beaux esprits d'une province. (I.2. pp. 330-331)

At one point (I.1. pp. 323-324), Turlupin comments on the various "ruses, inventions, subtilitez, equivoques, feintes et persuasions" that are needed in the practice of love on the stage, which he had written down and which he complains that Madame Boniface has destroyed out of spite. Bellerose warns, after he has left, that they must be careful not to upset Turlupin who is "des plus gentils garcons qui se puissent rencontrer pour le theatre." This kind of reference keeps before the spectator the awareness of the *reality* of this: or better, perhaps, that these are actors speaking of themselves, and of their art. Yet we must remember that, for the audience of the time, the real personalities of these actors are confused with their stage personalities. Although, really, Mme. Valliot is not Gaultier's wife, nor is there as yet any evidence that shows that the unidentified *farceur* Boniface is the same person as Nicolas Lion, known as Beaupré, husband of the actress who here plays Mme. Boniface, to the audience, accustomed to see these actors and actresses always occupy the same roles, they may appear as such. To the spectator, Boniface's avarice, Gaultier's jealousy, the bragging of the Capitaine, Guillaume's legendary drunkenness, are not characteristics confined to the stage, but are theirs also off-stage.[2] In many farces they used to make distinct and recognizable references to events either in their own lives or in those of the spectators:[3] this attitude is brought into this *Comédie des comédiens*. The actor played certain set roles: the lover (Beauchasteau) was the hero, surrounded by a number of other known characters. This practice survives into classical drama. We still have the brave, handsome lover of the 20's and 30's, who can always be played by the same actor, backed up by an old man (although he is no longer ridiculous as he was when played by Gaultier), an opponent of some kind, a lady to love, and so on. Thus the spectator knows what kind of character has come on stage as soon as he recognizes the actor, and, if he is given the chance, as he is here, to confuse actor and role it will be easy for him to do so: indeed, the actors themselves do so: Mme. Gaultier comments on her "husband's" jealousy, and remarks to Mme. Boniface that anything might happen if she had to kiss someone else on stage in the course of her performance:

> Et que sçay-je encor si la rage du docteur ne passera point jusqu'à l'extremité de luy faire representer au naturel les folies du docteur Gaultier? (II.2. p. 349)

This also reveals the further confusion that must have accompanied the plays we have already seen where the psychical distance of the spectator is deliberately kept fluctuating by other means as well.

With the end of this two act "prologue" we pass into a tragicomedy which the company supposedly goes off to rehearse, and we enter into the same kind of situation we described in Chapter III. Scudéry's play almost does the same thing, but manages narrowly to avoid it.

As we have suggested, the beginning of Scudéry's play appears slightly more complex than that of Gougenot. Mondory walks on in what this time is truly a prologue:

> Ie ne scay (Messieurs) quelle extrauagance est auiourd'huy celle de mes Compagnons, mais elle est bien si grande, que ie suis forcé de croire, que quelque charme leur dérobe la raison, & le pire que i'y voy, c'est, qu'ils taschent de me la faire perdre, & à vous autres aussi. Ils veulent me persuader que ie ne suis point sur vn Theatre; ils disent que c'est icy la ville de Lion, que voila vne Hostellerie; & que voicy vn jeu de paume, où des Comediens qui ne sont point nous, & lesquels nous sommes pourtant, representent vne Pastoralle, ces insensez ont tous pris des noms de guerre, & pensent vous estre inconnus [. . .]
> (Prologue, p. 1)

He goes on to mock their idea that he should call himself Monsieur Blandimare ("bien que ie m'apelle veritablement Mondory"), that they should pretend they are going to be there for twenty-four hours (since the spectators would have to send out for food and beds); in fact, he says, they are quite mad, and he would be going for help if it were not already too late in the day. He concludes that the spectators should make no noise so as to avoid upsetting them: "parce qu'estans melancholiques, ils sont amateurs du silence."

Thus, when the rest of the troupe come on, the spectator is already prepared for their performance. Yet when they do appear Belle Ombre is complaining of the bitterness of life as an actor, and although he momentarily protests their lack of success in the provincial town and his desire to be back in Paris, we soon pass to discussions between the actors on their profession, and a discussion between the actresses on the importunities to which they are subjected (I.3. pp. 12-15). Throughout all this they are supposedly in the inn to which Mondory referred in the prologue, and it is now that the director himself appears, playing M. Blandimare, who is ostensibly looking for his nephew. It is, of course, clear that to the spectator Blandimare and Mondory are a single person: hence, the entire performance that follows takes on the air of a rehearsal to which the public has been admitted. Belle Ombre turns out to be the long-lost nephew, and the remainder of the first play (the second act) becomes an attempt to show M. Blandimare the worthiness of the acting profession (which includes some praise of the worth of Scudéry himself).

This second act becomes even more an exercise when the troupe decides to prove their worthiness with the recitation of an "Eglogue Pastoral" (pp. 32-36). This so convinces Blandimare that he asks to be allowed to join the company, and they will perform the next day a "Tragi-comedie Pastorale, intitulee, L'Amour caché par l'amour" (I.2. p. 38), which the author happens to have given in manuscript to Blandimare, who liked it so much, as "tout ce qui vient de cet Autheur," that he has learned it by heart. It is this play that fills the next three acts, beginning, as we have said, with an argument between Le Prologue and l'Argument (pp. 43-50), which ends when the first recognizes himself to be "inutile" and the second allows he is "superflu." Subsequently the spectator is placed before a completely new scene: "Le Theatre change de face & paroist Bocager." This introduces the pastoral, which continues until Blandimare closes the triple play with a final comment to the audience (p. 108) to which we have already referred.

While Scudéry's play may be somewhat more complicated than Gougenot's, even more accomplished is Corneille's much better known Illusion comique (1635).[4] Until Rotrou's Saint-Genest (1645),[5] which is beyond the period we have chosen to discuss here, Corneille's play is without doubt the most interesting of this type of theatre. It has accordingly met with considerable critical attention, but I wish here to fit it into the pattern we are developing, since it is not long after that the theatre will have completed the change that we suggested at the outset. Professor Nelson is the nearest to my purpose,[6] but, in the course of this study I have come to disagree with many of his suggestions, and, I believe, to clarify other areas.

Alcandre, suggests the latter critic, is "both playwright and metteur en scène." Corneille, he adds, "has dramatized his dramaturgy" (52), his subject "is not the theatricality of life but the theatricality of the theatre" (56). As we have been trying to show here, the theatre to these playwrights is never just the theatre; it is "un abrégé du monde," and the writers never forget it, even if, as is possible, the primary purpose of Corneille in the Illusion comique, as in the two plays of Gougenot and Scudéry, is to make a comment on the theatre. Like the magician, Polistène, in Racan's Bergeries (II.4. pp. 55-61), Alcandre is showing what purports to be life.

The difference is that in Racan's play, Polistène, in fact, reveals a lie, Ydalie and Alcidor are not really lovers, whereas in l'Illusion comique, Alcandre is showing the truth -- or rather, the evocation of a past truth -- and it is not until later in Act V that truth and illusion become actually mingled. Further, they are indeed effectively mingled, for no clear distinction is made between them either for Pridamant or for us, who are in the auditorium, unless it be that they are now dressed in dazzling clothes. In Les Bergeries, the lie is surrounded by theatrical effects, and, in any case, the spectator knows beforehand that Polistène is tricking Arthenice. It must, on the other hand, have been a chastened audience that left the auditorium after a first viewing of Corneille's play: the first inner play, the truth, is presented deliberately as a play, the second, the lie, is presented in precisely the same tone as the first, so that if we accept the truth of the first we will also accept that of the second: there are, at least until the final revelation, only two visible planes of action for the spectator. These are the conjurations of Alcandre and the reactions of the spectator to them, and the life and play of Clindor and his companions. From Alcandre's point of view, there are also only two planes: that of his conjuration (which, although it actually is in two parts -- a truth and a lie -- is produced by him as one), and that of Pridamant's reactions to his conjuration. These two points of view cannot be mixed and fused, however. Pridamant cannot be our "surrogate" for he is always in a corner of the stage with [illegible] Alcandre before us. That is to say, Alcandre, and through him Corneille, may see Pridamant as a substitute for the actual spectator of the auditorium; but to this last he cannot be. From inside the play he may appear as being outside it, but to us outside the play, he must always be within it. Although, as Nelson again thinks, the three planes he identifies appear to have collapsed into one during the action of the play, because they meet "in the father's anxiety" which causes the latter to identify with his adulterous and murdered son of the final act (but which act is itself for the father but a continuation of the second plane), this collapse cannot occur for us. Pridamant and Alcandre are always there to remind us that we are before an evocation: for us there are always two planes of action, until, as I say, the final revelation when we see that there have actually been three planes, since we are shown Clindor, after the stage play, counting up the company's takings. No, for the spectator, the chastisement lies in the confusion of the second and third planes: mixed, indeed, in a more complicated manner than that of their being reduced by Alcandre to a single plane.

From the very outset of the play Alcandre himself is presented not only as the playwright and metteur en scène but as an actor. Dorante remarks to Pridamant on how carefully ruled are his every movement and gesture:

> Son corps malgré son aage a les forces robustes,
> Le mouvement facile et les desmarches justes:
> Des ressorts inconnus agitent le vieillard,
> Et font de tous ses pas des miracles de l'art. (I.1.ll. 85-88)

At first, then, the magician is presented as what to us he is: an actor. Thus we are brought face to face with the first plane, as an illusion.

Alcandre now assures Pridamant of his son's safety, honour and happiness; further, of "sa fortune esclatante" (l. 126). Then, mocking the trouble to which charlatan wizards go, he knocks with his wand:

> Il donne un coup de baguette & on tire un rideau derriere lequel sont en parade les plus beaux habits des Comediens.
> (Stage Direction, I. 2)

These, of course, represent not only the actors' costumes, but also the "traditional system of warning that a play is about to begin" (Nelson, op. cit., 50). We are thus introduced to the second plane of action, which does not conclude until the final "death" of Rosine and Clidamant, and the "abduction" of Ysabelle (V.5.l. 1724), when the curtain presumably fell again in 1635 as it did in 1644.[7] When it opens again (v.6.l. 1746), it is to reveal the falsehood of this last part of Clindor's "life" -- although this represented his reality of the moment.

Alcandre, then, introduces us to a play. From actor he becomes metteur en scène, and, indeed, playwright, since he makes the choice of what he wishes to show Pridamant: but, let us remember, this choice is from life:

> Sons une illusion vous pourriez voir sa vie,
> Et tous ses accidens devant vous exprimez
> Par des spectres pareils à des corps animés:
> Il ne leur manquera ny geste ny parole. (I.2.11. 150-153)

These "spectres parlans" (I.3.l. 212) will show his son's life "en spectacle" (l. 166), and whatever he sees he must not be upset, but remember that his son is now living in honour, although he has sunk fairly low before beginning his upward climb. Among other things he has had to make a living writing :

> Des chansons pour Gautier, des pointes pour Guillaume.
> (l. 181)

Whatever may be the common use of these names[8] they must surely have brought to mind, and have been intended to do so, the immortal farceurs of the Hotel de Bourgogne, now recently dead, but certainly alive in the minds of the spectators. So Corneille appears anxious to keep alive the idea of spectacle both at the primary level and at the secondary level. Furthermore, at the outset, Alcandre warns Pridamant and ourselves that we will finally be shown the glory of his present occupation:

> Lors que de ses amours vous aurez veu l'histoire,
> Je vous le veux monstrer plein d'esclat et de gloire,
> Et la mesme action qu'il pratique aujourd'huy.
> (I.3.11. 201-203)

There is a warning we may remember at the end when we have allowed ourselves to be completely fooled by the two illusions: that is, to confuse them both with one another, not with the first plane of Pridamant and Alcandre.

Now, however, the secondary plane truly gets under way with the appearance of Clindor and his master, Matamore:

> [. . .] Voyez desja paroistre
> Sous deux fantosmes vains, vostre fils et son Maistre.
> (II.1.11. 217-218)

And now, too, comes the catch to which we have been referring, for Matamore, as Corneille himself remarked in his later Examen, is essentially a stage character, a character created to make an audience laugh, one for whom there is "point d'original parmy les hommes." Thus the reality that Alcandre is creating is still mixed with a stage pretense; a stage pretense presented to us as a real part of Clindor's life. The Matamore is a kind of madman who creates himself and his own "reality" as he goes along:

> Et selon qu'il me plaist, je remplis tour à tour
> Les hommes de terreur, et les femmes d'amour.
> (II.2.11. 259-260)

He lives out his fantasy completely. Clindor and Ysabelle both agree with his creation, and are taken by him with utter seriousness. He has also a page, whose purpose is to bring him messages from various dignitaries (II.4). We are fooled into believing that the theatrical Matamore is a real madman. Even Clindor's irony may not be sufficient to make us realize there is something rather unnatural about the character. The fantasy of the tragedy they play in the last act intrudes into the reality of the evocation of Alcandre. Furthermore, this is not only the case for such an obviously theatrical creature as Matamore. What of Ysabelle and Clindor themselves? The lament of Clindor in prison (IV. 7.11. 1237-1296) is a standard piece of the actor's repertory. Corneille commented of madness (Examen, *Mélite*) that it was favoured because it offered the actor an opportunity to show his virtuosity, d'Aubignac has made the same complaints of *stances* and other lengthy set speeches. The lament has been made familiar already to the spectators: *Les Bergeries*, *Pyrame et Thisbé*; Auvray's *Dorinde* contains a long lament by the hero, Sigismon, as he languishes in prison (IV.2), Scudéry's Ligdamon bemoans his lot as he awaits condemnation (V.1), Schélandre's Belcar laments his imprisonment at even greater length (*Tyr et Sidon* [1628], Seconde journée, III.3; [1608 -- III.8]), and so on. In the Examen to *Clitandre*, whose title role, Corneille says, existed only "pour déclamer en prison" (p. 116), the author remarks of that play:

> Les monoloques sont trop longs, et fréquents en cette pièce; c'étoit une beauté en ce temps-là, les comèdiens

> les souhaitoient, et croyoient y paroître avec
> plus d'avantage. (p. 118)

The same applies, of course, to the lament of Isabelle (IV.1.11. 981-1031), of which, among others, the above-mentioned plays also each contain an example.

The point here is not the indebtedness of Corneille to his predecessors, which is obvious and inevitable.[9] What should be noticed is that these patently theatrical devices, created for the actor to show his talents as an actor, are to be found, not in the final tragedy, but in the apparent truth being presented by Alcandre. We supposedly accept the reality (if past) of his evocation of Clindor's life, despite these evidences of their unreal nature, and we mix it all the more with what Nelson considers the third plane of the final act. Reality, it appears, is not quite so clearly distinguishable from illusion as we would have liked to think. The confusion here lies in our inability to separate the reality of the one from the illusion of the other: the two planes of Alcandre's conjuration remain one to us until he decides to separate them. It is indeed a play in which

> Une série de miroirs y recule au delà du réel une
> humanité romanesque et baroque qui finit par s'effacer sous le fard et le masque tragique.[10]

We do not really, as Garapon suggests (Illusion, lvi), come face to face with "la plus stricte réalité," because, to do so, it would be necessary that Alcandre and Pridamant also be seen by us as actors, whereas it is only those who have all along been presented as actors who actually play out their role to the end. By their doing so, however, we do catch a glimpse of our own present reality of which Garapon is speaking. The question that is posed concerns, really, Nadal's mirrors: where do they stop, or, indeed, where do they start? For let us not forget that we too, the spectator of the auditorium, are spectators most of our time: how should we distinguish between the two?

What distinguishes these plays from those we discussed in the preceding chapter is that they are, despite this, plays on the theatre. That is to say that the problem which before was thrown into the audience is now pushed back into the play by a convenient frame. We are now distanced from that problem; for, if we identify with anyone, it can only be with the characters on the first plane, and through Pridamant, perhaps, with Clindor. However, this "second identification" cannot be continuous, for the theatrical nature of it keeps it too distinct from the first plane of the magician and father. In the plays of Scudéry and Gougenot this frame itself tends to waver and become confused on occasion with the picture it contains, not so in Corneille's where the frame consists in the continual visible presence of two characters watching the second action. It appears that with l'Illusion comique and La Place royalle (1633-1634?), Corneille is really preparing the way for a new attitude towards the theatre: in the first the popular theme has been pushed away from the spectator, in the second Corneille has already faced this theme with what will become his and others' primary occupation: the spectator's belief in a character with whom he may be made to feel, by keeping steady that faculty of the spectator we have chosen to call his "psychical distance," instead of keeping it constantly fluctuating so as to create doubt in our minds as to where we can find reality. Now the dramatist will create convincing characters whose problems may become our own: essentially moral and social problems.

NOTES

[1] Lancaster gives the date of the first performance of the play as 1632 (*History*, I.2, 472, n.4) because it is mentioned in Chandeville's preface to Scudéry's *Trompeur puni* whose *privilège* to Pierre Billaine is dated Dec. 18, 1632, and whose *achevé d'imprimer* is Jan. 4, 1633. Lancaster claims that the reference is to the play's appearance in print, not to its performance, and that it must therefore have appeared by the time the preface was written. In fact, the reference reads as follows:

Voila quel est le sentiment touchant ce Poëme, que vous verrez bientost suiuy d'vn Vassal Genereux & d'vne Comedie aussi extraordinaire en son inuention, que reguliere.

We know the comedy to be the *Comedie des comediens* because in the preface to *Arminius* [Paris: Quinet & de Sercy, 1644] this is the order in which Scudéry says he had composed them.

The reference is to "un" *Vassal genereux* not "le," which would seem to imply that it was not yet known, and would accordingly suggest that the preface is referring indeed to performance. We should, then, date the play's first performance in 1633. This is confirmed by an *Epigramme* of Guerente published before the *Trompeur puni*, which ends as follows:

> Poursuy de trauailler tousiours de mieux en mieux,
> Et bien que tous les deux* soient dans vn poinct extreme,
> Acheuant ton VASSAL, fay dire aux enuieux,
> SCUDERY tous les ans se surpasse luy-mesme.
>
> *(*i.e.*, *Ligdamon et Lidias* and *Le Trompeur puni*)

Furthermore, if Gougenot's play had appeared at the time of the writing of this preface, why had Scudéry not already named his play by the same title, since when it appeared it was clearly intended to compete with it? Might it not be that Gougenot's play did not, in fact, appear until the year (1633) suggested by Les frères Parfaict (see *Histoire*, V. 62ff.; *Dictionnaire*, II, 125), and that its swift publication in the same year (which I assume to be the only reason for Lancaster's choosing of a date, 1631-1632) was because of the almost simultaneous appearance of Scudéry's play? Perhaps Scudéry was working on a five act play when Gougenot's appeared, and he simply combined what he had with notes for another play to make a schema similar to Gougenot's so that the Marais might have a rival play. (In 1634, the verse play *L'Amour caché par l'amour* was replaced, according to the *Gazette* by Corneille's *Mélite*, so such a manufacturing of the play is not out of the question[see Parfaict, *Hist*. V. 73]). If this is indeed what occurred then the play of Scudéry supports further what we are suggesting here, for it adds to the evidence of the examination of the theatre then taking place, because the play will have been more than a simple emulation of Gougenot's.

[2] For the connections of these characters with the Italian improvisers, whose stage and real personalities are quite intertwined, see Gustave Attinger, *L'Esprit de la Commedia dell'Arte dans le Théâtre française* (Paris: Librie. Théâtrale; Neuchâtel: La Baconniere, 1950), 100-109, and I. A. Schwartz, *The Commedia dell'Arte and its Influence on French Comedy in the Seventeenth Century* (New York University, [1931]), 50, 59.

[3] See Edouard Fournier, éd., *Chansons de Gaultier Garguille* (Paris: Jannet, 1858), Introduction, xii-xv; and Tallemant des Réaux, *Les Historiettes*, éd., Georges Mongrédien (Paris: Garnier, n.d.), III, 232-233; VII, 127.

[4] For this dating see Pierre Corneille, *L'Illusion comique. Comédie*, éd., Robert Garapon (Paris: Didier, "STFM," 1957), Introduction, xv-xvi.

[5] See, on this play, bibliography and the article of J. D. Hubert, "Le réel et l'illusoire dans le théâtre de Corneille et dans celui de Rotrou," *RSH* (juil.-sept., 1959), 333-350, and Robert J. Nelson, *Play within a Play. The Dramatist's Conception of his Art: Shakespeare to Anouilh*, Yale Romanic Studies, Second Series, V (New Haven: Y.U.P., 1958), 36-46.

[6] *Op. cit.*, Ch. 4, "Corneille: the Play as Magic," 47-61.

[7] See Garapon, *Illusion*, 116, note.

[8] *Ibid.*, 16, note 4.

[9] *Ibid.*, xxi-xlii, for a very complete examination of sources.

[10] Octave Nadal, *Le Sentiment de l'amour dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), 118.

V. "HORACE:" THE SPECTATOR AND CHARACTER

Saint-Evremond once made a comment of considerable interest when comparing Corneille's *Sophonisbe* with that of Mairet. The former, he said, failed because the heroine captured too well the spirit of the period in which she lived, whereas

> Mairet, qui avait dépeint la sienne infidèle au vieux Syphax, et amoureux du jeune et victorieux Massinisse, plut quasi-généralement à tout le monde, pour avoir rencontré le goût des dames et le vrai esprit des gens de la cour. (*Oeuvres melées*, 300)

This remark contains what is essentially the basic reason for considering Mairet's play a forerunner of the "classical" theatre. It refers to that *recognizability* of character which makes possible, even easy, the sympathy of the spectator, and ultimately his identification with that character. What is equally significant is that Saint-Evremond should have considered the lack of this factor to be responsible for the failure of Corneille's play in 1663. Donneau de Visé has somewhere made a similar comment.

Already in his often remarkable preface to *L'Amaranthe* (1631), Gombauld made some illuminating remarks concerning this aspect of the search for verisimilitude on the stage, remarks which further clarify that of Saint-Evremond. Speaking of those authors who have sought to reduce the time of a play's action to twelve hours (although their numbers are exceedingly few in 1631), he continues:

> [. . .] ils n'ont pas tant deliberé de representer une chose passée, que d'agir comme si elle estoit

> presente; & comme si leurs personnages en estoient les vrays Hercules, les Thrasons, ou les Amynthes: qui en ce cas-là ne peuuent auoir d'autre distinction de temps que celle du iour auquel ils agissent.

We need hardly comment here on the astonishingly modern air of this passage. What is of importance for us is that, throughout his preface, Gombauld is constantly comparing two kinds of theatre and two distinct types of spectator reaction to them. He is praising here a theatre, which will become the so-called "classical" theatre, because it presents characters in the same time dimension as the spectator, rather than as "une chose passée" -- and we may notice, also, the distinction he makes between "une chose" and "personnages." This present character may catch the spectator and bring him to share his emotions: Hercules must be Hercules, not an imitation of him. He criticizes a distance which prevents the spectator from knowing a character as "vray," which presents the character as belonging in a different dimension from the spectator, which suggests him to be a mythological, hence artificial, being. This is why these characters represent a seventeenth century ideal, rather than a Roman or a Greek. This is why their dress must be contemporary and why their speech must be a purified version of the language of polite society. It is also why, adds Gombauld a little later, those authors who are turning in this direction

> ont eu bonne grace de vouloir que le lieu, le temps, les mouuemens, & toutes les circonstances du Theatre parussent autant qu'il est possible vray-semblables & conformes au sentiment du spectateur.

All those things represented by the stage must fit into a single and even time scheme, which the spectator may then adopt for his own; and nothing must break the evenness that is thus demanded.

The dialectic clash of elements we have noticed in what we have here termed the "theatre of doubt" can have no place in this theatre where character has become all-important; and where, for this reason, the maintaining of our psychical distance at a constant must admit of no sudden awareness that we are in an illusion:

> Il ne faut jamais mêler ensemble ce qui concerne la représentation d'un poème avec l'action véritable de l'histoire représentée.

So said d'Aubignac in the Pratique (45), where he goes on to blame Plautus for precisely that offense:

> Dans son Amphitryon Jupiter est supposé dans la ville de Thèbes au temps de la naissance d'Hercule; et quand il paraît sous la forme d'Amphitryon, il dit aux spectateurs: 'Je suis Jupiter, et me change en Amphitryon quand il me plaît, paraissant ainsi et pour l'amour de vous,' dit-il aux spectateurs, 'afin de continuer cette comédie, et pour l'amour d'Alcmène, afin qu'elle soit reconnue innocente.' Où l'on voit qu'il mêle l'intérêt des spectateurs avec celui des acteurs, en fait un assemblage des Romains qui étaient présents avec des personnes que l'on suppose agir en Grèce. (48)

Here the spectator is abruptly brought face to face with the unreality of the stage, complains d'Aubignac, and the characters are no longer acceptable as personalities in their own right, but are visibly a deceit. There has been a fluctuation in the awareness of the spectator.

There is in the staging itself now the lack of confusion needed, so it was thought, to achieve this identification. However artificial may appear the unity of place in a play like Horace, it has the advantage of offering no obstacle to the spectator's belief in the illusion offered to him. The scenic continuity of the auditorium and stage, in terms of decoration and lighting (which last was left alight throughout the theatre for the whole performance),[1] now that the basically non-illusionary sets have been changed for a single decor[2] whose lines communicate with those of the auditorium,[3] leads to a complete unobtrusiveness of the theatrical elements, to enable identification to occur with a minimum of difficulty. We should notice, too, how the long rhetorical passages, which Corneille has said in his Examen to Clitandre were put in purely to please the actors, diminish in importance.

It may, of course, be said that Clitandre himself was of small significance, which is undoubtedly true, but Corneille manages to make him important by putting him in the title role. This is very different from what occurs later. There laments were simply moments in the dialectical opposition of the elements, here they move the action, they resolve an internal struggle in a character or they bring necessary information. Perhaps the most famous lament of them all, Rodrigue's "Percé jusques au fond du coeur" (Le Cid, I, 6), is the resolution of an internal struggle upon which the play's action depends. Camille's lament in Horace when she knows the fate of Curiace at the hands of her brother (IV.4) results in her decision to seek her own death at his hands and creates the need for the final act of the play. It fills her character, for if she did not seek death -- as we shall see -- she would be untrue to herself.

Under the new organization of the play, and with its changed goals, which demand a singularity of place to leave the spectator undisturbed by the stage, the récit becomes a necessary part of the text. They are, nonetheless, kept as unobtrusive as possible. Valère's lengthy récit (Horace, IV.2.11. 1101-1161) concerning the real outcome of the battle between the brothers, is carefully divided with a cry from Camille and an outburst from the elder Horace; but even when it is not, as is the case for that most famous of récits, Racine's "récit de Théramène" (Phèdre, V. 6), the author makes sure that the continuance of the plot depends on it, so that the spectator is not suddenly placed before the long speech, but is eagerly waiting to be told what he must know. Furthermore, these long speeches (not the laments, which now resolve a principle struggle) are now given to secondary roles, so that it is no longer intended as an opportunity for the actor playing the hero to show his virtuosity. Finally, it is spoken, not to the spectators, but to the other characters, who need to know the information thus being brought. Whatever may be the metaphorical content of a récit like that of Théramène, the speech itself is made as unobtrusive as possible. Even in the case of this last one, the rather unusual nature of the information fits into the atmosphere of the play, so that the final evocation of Neptune's fulfillment of Thésée's curse scarcely startles the spectator.

With the reduction, then, of the separate theatrical elements, the way is open for the creation of character. And character is effectively all that must occupy the stage, if the identification is to be more-or-less constantly effective.

Less dramatic than Rotrou's

> Seigneur, au nom du roi, j'arrete vôtre altesse.
> (Laure persecutée [1637], I.1. --
> Le comte)

or his

> Prenés un siège, Prince, et vous, Infant, sortés.
> (Vencelas [1647], I.1. -- Venceslas)

the beginning of Horace nonetheless introduces us straightway to the anguish of character as Sabine seeks help from Julie:

> Approuvez ma foiblesse, et souffrez ma douleur;
> Elle n'est que trop juste en un si grand malheur.
> (I.1. 1-2)[4]

as she tries to overcome her inner despair at the threat posed to her family:

> Le trouble de mon coeur ne peut rien sur mes larmes. (1.8)

Julie's reproach to Sabine provides us in as real a way as possible with the reason for her emotion, made all the more real because the spectator is immediately interested and curious. Once we know this reason, once we know her lament is due to her being an Alban married to a Roman under circumstances that are presently exceptional, we know the basic donnée of the play: Alba and Rome are to fight; one will emerge as master and the other as slave. Now that we know this, we are immediately interested to know the effects of this situation on the various characters. Surprises, if Corneille is to produce any, must be created only for the reactions they will elicit from the characters. If the playwright does this, then the interest he has aroused in the spectator for his character, may easily become identification.

The second scene introduces the spectator to the similar despair of Camille, whose long lament (163-222), like those of Sabine in the previous scene, no longer serves to keep him aware of the actress, but instead, and because he is already interested in them, takes him into the emotions of the character. For where before the lament was simply a long monologue leading nowhere, resolving nothing, commenting on the actor's surroundings and on the magnitude of his misfortunes, it is now an entrance to the interior struggle of the character. It lays open the emotions of a character, not as the means to embroider upon an ever more convoluted language, but as a way into his soul. Moreover, this lament of Camille also introduces us to a certain rivalry between the two women, for in it, she reveals to the spectator that the family relations are even more inextricably combined with the relations of the two cities than he may have thought. Already, in her protests that her fate is as hard, if not harder than, that of Sabine, we see the hint of a rivalry, which will add to the spectator's curiosity concerning the struggle of the characters with their consciences.

Corneille now plays for a while (the first of three times) with the advantage he has over the spectator, allowing him a short relaxation before facing him with a greater anguish. He introduces the joyous Curiace with news of a "peace" between Rome and Alba, or, at least, that there is not to be a general battle. What is interesting is that the personality of Curiace, as it appears here, will remain essentially even: the joy he shows here is matched by his reluctance -- or, more precisely, his lack of eagerness (as opposed to Horace himself) -- for the battle between the Horatii and his family:

> Que désormais le ciel, les enfers et la terre
> Unissent leurs fureurs à nous faire la guerre;
> Que les hommes, les Dieux, les démons et le sort
> Préparent contre nous un général effort!
> [. . .] (II.3. 423-430)

His horror then at the idea that the brothers have to fight is in utter contrast to the reaction of Horace. Further, his reactions then to the deeper problem they face, and his joy now at the prospect of peace, allow us to foresee, after we have become somewhat familiar with the attitudes of his brother-in-law, that he will necessarily die at the hands of

Horace in the battle between them. Unlike Horace, while honour is important to him, his honour is that of the _honnête homme_, it is not the honour, sought by the magnanimous hero, to which glory is a necessary adjunct.

It is this sustaining of character, together with the toning down of those other elements which it implies, which distinguishes the "classical" theatre from its predecessor. It is worthy of our attention, then, that Corneille does not introduce his hero until he is in a position to glory in his honour (by hoping for war before, he would merely have shocked the spectator, now he is reacting to something beyond his power to affect), to indulge in a little modesty he does not appear to feel, and above all to show the nature of his character as he could not have done before the choice had been made that he defend his country in the duel mentioned by Curiace:

> Quoi! vous me pleureriez mourrant pour mon pays! (II.1. 398)

As he exclaims to Curiace, who already shows his feelings to be further torn: a concern at once for family and country that Horace is incapable of feeling. Curiace's inability at first to take in the full import of Flavian's announcement that he is to fight Horace ("Qui?" he responds), his subsequent laments and Horace's immediate hardening are to be completely expected. Here there is no question, as there is for Ligdamon, of changing, chameleon-like, from lover to warrior, from softness to harshness, according to what the script calls for. Horace and Curiace react entirely predictably to what for the one is an opportunity to win yet greater glory, and for the other is simply a death sentence -- for the honour of his family he cannot refuse, for the love of his family he cannot defeat Horace. Curiace, of course, accepts the call, at the same time as being repulsed by the reaction of Horace:

> Mais votre fermeté tient un peu du barbare. (II.3. 456)

To Horace's hardening ("je ne vous connois plus"), Curiace can only reply with a piece of what appears as unconscious irony, but which is more nearly a consciousness of himself quite in harmony with what we already know of him:

> Je vous connois encore, et c'est ce qui me tue. (II.3. 503)

This self-awareness on the part of Curiace is apparent again when he replies to Camille's question as to whether his feelings match those of Horace:

> Hélas! je vois trop bien qu'il faut, quoi que je fasse,
> Mourir, ou de douleur, ou de la main d'Horace.
> (II.5. 535-536)

Horace, on the contray, is blind to all possible struggle. It is not with Horace that the average spectator can identify. He is a kind of juggernaut who rolls over those around him, himself showing none of his feelings, but rousing in the others all kinds of anguish. We may watch Horace, perhaps in admiration, perhaps in horror, but we _feel_ with Curiace, with Sabine and with Camille, and we are only too aware of their helplessness towards Horace. Yet because we feel for them in this way, Horace becomes included in our emotions.

In the same way, we look upon the elder Horace, noble, but resigned because he too has the blood of the Horatii, and if he understands the full horror of a situation which his son is as yet unable to comprehend, it seems more because of experience than as a part of his character. Thus it is only after telling Horace and Curiace to go and prepare themselves for their duel, that he allows himself any tenderness:

> Ah! n'attendrissez point ici mes sentiments;
> Pour vous encourager ma voix manque de termes;
> Mon coeur ne forme point de pensers assez fermes;
> Moi-même en cet adieu j'ai des larmes aux yeux,
> Faites votre devoir, et laissez faire aux Dieux.
> (II.8. 706-710)

The individual personalities of the characters and their family traits are intensified by the rivalry between Sabine and Camille, matching that of Curiace and Horace, which seems to be followed right from the start of the play, when, in Act I, Scene 2, Camille appears to tell Julie that her situation is more intense than that of Sabine:

> Croit-elle ma douleur moins vive que la sienne
> [. . .] (I.2. 136-145)

So, when Corneille chooses, for the second time, to bring relief to the spectator with the news that the armies refuse to accept the chosen champions in view of their relationship, Sabine is ready, as was Curiace before her, to rejoice (III.2), Camille, however, is less easily moved. On the contrary, she says:

> Ce délai de nos maux rendra leurs coups plus rudes; (III.3. 835)

and a little later the distinction is made clearer, as Sabine responds to Julie's hopes:

> Sab.: Comme vous je l'espère.
> Cam.: Et je n'ose y songer. (III.3. 869)[5]

This little argument is followed by the somewhat banal, but completely expected, dispute between them as to who has the greatest reason for suffering (III.4), in which, typically, Camille has the last word.

It is now that the elder Horace appears with the evil news that the brothers are fighting, and the spectator is brought right back into his deepest anxieties, following the relief (but not disengagement) afforded by the hesitation and the "petty" squabble between the two women. Again the laments are Sabine's, while Camille -- which is to be remarked -- remains silent. Certainly she had expected it, but one has the feeling, too, that she welcomes the opportunity it will afford to show her spirit, that, like Horace, she would have been upset if the hand-to-hand battle between the brothers had been avoided. She seems already to be hardening for a final victory, which will take her in the opposite direction to that of Horace; for her love must win: already we have seen how sure she seems of the outcome (III.3); in her dispute with Sabine she makes the spectator more conscious of her self-awareness:

> Pour moi, j'ai tout à craindre, et rien à souhaiter.
> (III.4. 894)

The similarity of this remark to the despairing tones of Curiace is striking; but where Curiace's fate is the result of a necessity over which he can have little effect, hers is the result of a deliberate choice. When she learns the truth of the outcome of the combat, she will force Horace to kill her:

> Offensez sa victoire, irritez sa colère.
> Et prenez, s'il se peut, plaisir à lui déplaire.
> Il vient: préparons-nous à montrer constamment
> Ce que doit une amante à la mort d'un amant. (IV.4. 1247-1250)

Naturally, as she had known, she succeeds in her object; as Sabine recognizes when she begs her husband to treat her the same way:

> Que Camille est heureuse! elle a pu te déplaire;
> Elle a reçu de toi ce qu'elle a prétendu,
> Et recouvre là-bas tout ce qu'elle a perdu. (IV.7. 1380-1382)

At the false news of the Alban victory, however, Camille simply pities her brothers, two of whom, as her father points out, are dead, while the third is dishonoured (III.6), while Sabine, on the contrary, aska that Horace be forgiven and that they make the most of what happiness they can have. The different attitudes of the characters at all times maintain the spectator's curiosity.

The audience, like the elder Horace and Camille, soon change their feelings when Valère brings the news of the real outcome of the battle (IV.2). Once again we see that Corneille is careful to hide those characters who would have to change somewhat: for if Sabine appeared now she could only do precisely that -- her laments would lead nowhere, for she has not the kind of initiative possessed by the Horatii, and it is no longer time for them to come into conflict with those of Camille, who is now in a position to take up a precise stand. If Sabine appeared now her moral stature would be diminished. Not so Camille, whose vital complaint now results in her decision to die, and in doing so, at once to rejoin her lover and throw in the face of Horace all the despair of a situation to which he has been blind. She succeeds. He is unable to treat Sabine cruelly when, on the basis of a similar "crime," she asks that he deal with her as he did with Camille.

It is not until the end, however, that Horace, by being forced to live with both his glory and his sister's murder, is brought truly up against the awareness of his monstrosity. Claiming death for himself, as did Valère, he asks for it not as punishment but as the stamp of his honour:

> Un seul point entre nous met cette différence,
> Que mon honneur par là cherche son assurance,
> Et qu'à ce même but nous voulons arriver,
> Lui pour flétrir ma gloire, et moi pour la sauver.
> (V.2. 1551-1554)

He is refused. He may live because his glory is above his crime (V.3.

1760), he may live to serve the state, but he will live, henceforth, with both that glory and that crime. The play terminates at a point when the spectator risks meeting a changed Horace.

Throughout, then, Corneille concentrates on maintaining distinct characters, whose motivations are clearly communicated and whose actions come clearly from them. They are recognizable, they are confirmed in their interior anguish, above all they constantly maintain the same tone, making sure that the spectator's psychical distance is not allowed constantly to change.

The convincing characters, the lack of elaborate but non-illusionary sets, the removal of such speeches as interrupt the action, attention to acceptable bridges from one scene to the next, the omission of fictional characters, and so on, this is the result and the aim of the search for vraisemblance. As Villiers has said: "c'est une nouvelle relation entre l'acteur et le spectateur."[6] With the character the spectator may be brought to feel, and then to reflect upon, a problem that is essentially a moral or a social one. He is not himself put in a situation, but identifies with a particular character who is facing a moral dilemma, and through whose eyes and emotions he, the spectator, may feel it.

NOTES

[1] See Sabbattini, op. cit., 62-63.

[2] See Mahelot, Mémoire, 110, where Horace calls for a "palais à volonté," a translation for the sake of the decorator of Corneille's note "une salle de la maison d'Horace."

[3] For further comments, see André Villiers, "Illusion dramatique et dramaturgie classique," XVIIe. Siècle, 73 (1966), 28-29.

[4] The edition used is that of the "grands Ecrivains," edited by Marty-Laveaux (III, 243-358). I have used throughout, where they exist, the variants of the 1641 edition; in keeping with the use of the first editions for the earlier plays.

[5] In later editions (from 1660), this difference is further emphasized by a slight change:

Sab.: J'ose encor l'espérer.
Cam: Moi, je n'espère rien.

[6] Op. cit., 34.

VI. CONCLUSION

In a period when men like Copernicus and Galileo were voicing doubts about the nature and form of the universe (and proving the validity of these doubts), when theologians such as Luther and Calvin, de Bèze and Erasmus were questioning the generally accepted views of man's relationship to that universe, and the wars of religion themselves were leading to uncertainty regarding the nature of man himself, his modes of thought, and so many other things, it became necessary for the artist, like the others, to re-evaluate his traditional forms of expression.

In drama, the kind of aura that made possible the mystery, similar to that of the Greek dram in terms of its ritual and all-embracing manner, began to disappear. The feeling of unanimity which might unite a crowd before these mighty dramas, was surrendering to a feeling of uniqueness, of individuality, which made impossible this kind of drama. The Pléiade artists were perhaps a symptom rather than a cure; or maybe the theatre-going public was just not prepared for them yet. Turning their back on the wider audience, because the theatre there was dissolving, they produced a theatre that answered no exigency in its public, a theatre by the rules, successful in its milieu because of its originality and its poetry, but unsuccessful as theatre because they did not see -- or were not in a position to see -- what it was that made the success of the mediaeval theatre, of the mystery, or what made for the unity of the audience before a farce.

Hardy, on the other hand, was well aware of the needs of his audience, just as he knew that the old forms had lost their meaning. He realized that, for one reason or another, the feeling of being a part of a vast machine, of belonging together in an aura of common superstition which viewed man as a single totality under God and which permeated the whole of life, that this sentiment had been lost. Along with this went the need to create new forms of communication which could be equally meaningful.

He must have been successful, because he remained Valleran's paid poet, and kept a travelling theatrical company (for whom life was far from easy) in front of sufficient audiences to enable them to keep working. It is true that we retain only a small percentage of his vast output, but we may assume, I think, that those plays, if chosen because he felt they were his best and most likely to please his readers of the mid-1620's, were nonetheless representative of his style. We have tried to show what this style was: an attempt to take those elements central to his stage production and keep them bound tight, as it were, under an overall atmosphere created essentially by the text, the spoken word. Hardy seems to take his audience under this atmosphere into a kind of "mock-up of life as they were accustomed to feeling it.

The changes in outlook were rapid, however. This creation of Hardy (which seems to find a weaker echo in the plays of Montchrestien and Billard) cannot satisfy for very long. The theatre changes, it works towards a form which will echo the new emphasis on the individual, a theatre where the spectator communes with a character and into which a total ritualistic atmosphere never enters. The period between 1625 and 1640 is witness to experiments, which, however, follow a basic trend. The artist must seek a new mould, for the change is very basic: he is placed face to face with the problems of a change from the belief which allowed men to feel part of a unity to one which, by allowing man to question, freed him of his ties with God, based, as they had been, on a traditional burden of unquestionable Patristic doctrine, and, as a corollary, freed him of his mystic ties with his fellow. No longer could he rely on the ritual of the mystery or on the simple buffoonery of the farce or _sottie_.

His audience was becoming more sophisticated (_i.e._, more curious of the world about him), and it needed something more satisfying than the latter, and less diffuse than the former. Their world was suddenly more complex, and the author could not show it in a single play any longer, no matter how long: God was no longer so close to man as to permeate everything and do away with the need for explanation; nor could the audience ever more be satisfied only with the uncomplicated situations of the farce with its standard types and plots. The expression of God no longer expressed man and his world (this distance explains, too, that lack of familiarity with God which resulted in, among other things, the banning of the mysteries): eventually the theatre had to choose to represent things more narrow in scope than the mystery, less simplified than the farce.

Between the disappearance of the one and the advent of the other, there had to be a period of transition when, as it happened, and was perhaps natural since its central character was doubt, the problems which interested the playwright revealed both a metaphysical reflection and a questioning of the theatre itself. The problem facing the playwright as an artist coincided with a more general one: that of the nature of reality itself. Thus in the theatre we studied in Chapter III, the illusory world of the theatre is thrown into doubt and pulls with it the external world in which the spectator found himself.

The change we have been discussing involves then considerably more than mere wildness on the way to order. When Lancaster makes the disparaging remark about Pierre Mainfray's Chasse Royalle (1628) that

> The play is at the same time allegorical, mythological, and realistic, a strange medley, typical of much that was written at the time [. . .] (History, I, 1, 229)

or even when Lebègue comments on the flourish, the breadth of the "baroque theatre," I believe one of the main points is missed: for these very elements represent a completely different mode of thought from that of the classical or mediaeval theatre. Whatever may be the precise intention -- or lack of it -- in the work of any given author, behind the general change lies a shift in the "world view." It would appear that there is played out here the great shift in a dialectic mode of reasoning to an analytical one, a shift usually considered to have occurred somewhat earlier than 1630-1640, although, in fact, this period corresponds roughly with that of the changes wrought in the traditional manner of learning by Ramus and Descartes in France, by Bacon in England.

Speaking of the strange mixture of truth and illusion to be found in Rotrou's Saint-Genest, which allows the spectator to reach "truth" through illusion; Bürger remarks:

> In diesem Paradox fassen wir das Denkschema einer Zeit, der die Realität selbst dialektisch in Schein und Sein zerfällt, der die Spannung von Illusion und Wirklichkeit, die das Wesen des Theaters ausmacht, zugleich die Form ist, in der sie das Problem der Selbstverwirklichung des Menschen denkt.[1]

The spectator is subjected to this tension as a part of the theatrical situation in which he finds himself by the dialectical use of the elements of the theatre of which we spoke earlier. This mode of the theatre, however, which forces the spectator into a constant fluctuation between belief and disbelief, which will throw him into what normally he could not believe, and pull him from that which he normally accepts, this cannot last for long. For it throws an equal doubt on the very artistic mould which conveys it.

The tension is first thrust away from the spectator, by being placed in a "frame," and the very frame which cuts the spectator off from the anxiety of the world of madness offers him relief. The magician and his spectator who, in l'Illusion comique, represent for the spectator a way into that anxiety, also present him with a means of escaping it. By identifying with a character, the spectator feels his anxiety himself, but, so to speak, at a distance, by proxy. The dialectical opposition which would be an obstacle to such identification is removed, and the playwright may take us ever deeper into a character. The problems we now face are necessarily of a moral, rather than a metaphysical nature, for the man with whom we are to identify must be shown in the dilemma of a social conflict. This need not suggest that the style of the earlier theatre does not continue -- in the fantasies of Corneille the younger and Quinault , for example --

but they are now accomplished by another style of theatre.

We should note that other forms of the theatre evolve in a similar direction: the *ballets de cour* (see Appendix) go from an all-embracing, "total" theatre to a stage spectacle, the old semi-improvised, and hence more intimate, farces disappear, the *commedia dell'arte* eventually becomes the scarcely improvised and more formal *comédie italienne*, the *pièces à machines* form a genre of their own as the regular theatre diminishes its scenery more and more (so much so that the Marais had to produce them almost exclusively to survive in competition with the more talented Hotel de Bourgogne after their troupe had been finally decimated).

The shift in emphasis, then, is from a theatre which involves the spectator in a total theatrical situation, which forces him into preoccupations of a metaphysical nature by keeping him in a position where he is unable to fix reality within a firm distance of his perceptions, to a theatre which makes him identify with the emotions and moral preoccupations of a single, recognizable character.

NOTE

[1] P. Bürger, "Illusion und Wirklichkeit im Saint-Genest von Jean Rotrou," Germanisch-romanische Monatschrift, 14 (1964), 267.

APPENDIX

The Ballets de Cour

What we have described as having taken place in the regular theatre, appears to have found its echo in the *ballets de cour*. This has its importance, for the ballets depended for their effect almost entirely on movement, on design, and on machines, rather than on a text:

> On peur presque dire que la machine était le fond même du ballet de cour. Son role commençait quelquefois avant l'action, par la construction ou l'apparition subite de la salle, qui formait ainsi la première partie du spectacle.
>
> (Victor Fournel, *Les Contemporains de Molière*, II, 209)

A little later in the same work, Fournel has something to say on the costumes:

> Les costumes rivalisèrent avec les machines: ils étalaient généralement d'une richesse surprenante. Un ballet était pour les courtisans une occasion solonnelle de lutter d'éclat, tant par orgueil personnel que pour faire leur cour au roi, qui aimait le faste en toutes choses, principalement dans les habits, autour de lui comme sur sa personne. (II, 212)

In a very real sense the ballet of the beginning of the seventeenth century was an *impromptu*, of the court rather than of the theatre. Strictly speaking, of course, it was a highly organized affair, but to the "spectator," who has friends or is himself in the ballet, it was a kind of game, it was the court itself under a slightly different guise. Indeed, even the guise was often lacking, for the situations it reproduced might well be those that existed outside it. Fournel cites the example of two lovers who find themselves "remplissant des rôles où ils retrouvaient une image de leur passion réciproque" (*op. cit.*, II, 192). The ballets of Benserade and the earlier ones whose designs still exist, show how the verses given to the characters did double duty: having at once a personal implication, almost always clearly comprehensible, either for the "character" speaking or for the one spoken to, and at the same time a meaning in the plot of the ballet. Once again the play comes very near to reality.

According to Henri Prunières (*Le Ballet de Cour en France*, 3-9), the origins of the ballet go back to the more-or-less impromptu and disorganized *momeries* of the middle ages: this spirit seems to have lived on in the ballet despite the change in nature and actors. Beaujoyeulx's *Balet comique de la Royne* (1581) is much more organized than these *momeries* ever were, and the dancers have become noble -- nay, royal, even -- but the affair still seems to have the air of a joyous party rather than a show. We are told that this particular ballet ran from 10:00 P.M. to 3:30 A.M., a long, but by no means unusually long performance. Usually each ballet had only one performance, which adds to the atmosphere of freshness and of the impromptu they have in other ways. In this same ballet, for instance, Beaujoyeulx calls for a nobleman to come running from Circé's garden and beg the protection of the King (Prunières, *op. cit.*, 90-91). The audience could scarcely be brought much closer to the spectacle.

Prunières suggests that it is around 1620 that the *ballet de cour* reaches the height of its glory and development, before the death of De Luynes (1621), who was responsible for the arrangement of most of them, and that there was thereafter a decline until the ballet *Prosperité* des Armes de la France in 1641 (op. cit., 121-124). This, of course, covers the period of the change in the regular theatre that we have been studying.

At its highest point of achievement at the beginning of the century, the ballet de cour is indeed a "total" theatre that completely surrounds its participants, a kind of organized seventeenth-century "happening," a theatre that completely involves all those present in an experience different from, but not totally separate from, their everyday reality. Prunières, once again, has characterized the state of the "ballet-dramatique" around this period, as it had developed from the older "ballet-mascarade," in the following terms:

> Le genre nouveau, paré de toutes les grâces et de toutes les séductions des fêtes de Cours antérieures, emprunte au drame son intrigue suivie et son unité. La musique et la danse cessent d'interrompre l'action pour y participer. Récits, airs, ballets, pantomimes ont leur raison d'être au seul point de vue de l'expression dramatique. Nous sommes loin des mascarades italiennes ou françaises aux intrigues rudimentaires; ici la poésie, la musique et la danse concourrent également à l'effet scénique. (Op. cit., 93)

And into this total effect is placed the spectator/participant, the nobleman of the court.

However, between 1620 and 1641 an important change, which had already got underway, runs almost its full course: a stage is gradually raised on which the characters may perform. Although in the apparently remarkable Ballet de la Prosperité des Armes de la France, which (together with Mirame) opened the Palais Cardinal in 1641, a bridge still links the King with the stage, and although it is still the King and his courtiers who are usually written into Benserade's ballets (see Charles Silin, Benserade and his Ballets de Cour), the very fact that a bridge is needed very literally dramatizes the gap that has been opened between what is now definitely the spectator and a stage. Increasingly, too, the roles are taken by professional actors. Moreover, the stage it was moving to was itself more and more intended to delude the spectator. This is the direction in which Torelli was going with his elaborate sets (see Bjurström, _op_. _cit_.), which are created to convince the spectator of the reality of what he is watching. In the _Gazette_ there is a comment on the astonishment of the spectators before Torelli's staging of Rossi's _Orfeo_ in 1647:

> Les changements de décoration étaient surprenants; les spectateurs doutaient s'ils ne changeaient pas eux-mêmes de place.
>
> (Quoted by André Villiers, "Illusion dramatique et dramaturgie classique," _XVIIe_. _Siècle_, 73 [1966], 5)

Classical dramaturgy makes empathy easier for the spectator, because the total illusion is placed before him at a single even level. For this kind of empathy to occur the spectator cannot himself be physically a part of the illusion. Between the awareness of his own physical reality in the illusion (in this last case) and the acceptance, at an intellectual or imaginative level, of a different temporal and spatial environment represented by the illusion in which he finds himself, there can be no meeting. Physical presence in the illusion, even for the actor who has immersed himself in the play characters, their situations and their motivations, is apparently something achieved only extremely rarely: after all, his sharing in the action of the illusion, has to start with a lack of belief in its reality. To be included, in terms of personal identification with a character, in the stage illusion, the imagination has to forget the body. The spectator sitting before the illusion may, if the staging and so on do not prevent it, easily forget his own physical presence to accept the emotions of the stage character. This is the impulse behind classical dramaturgy. Placed inside that illusion, however, particularly when he was partly playing himself as well as a character, as was the case for the courtier of the earlier ballets, and with that illusion taking place on the physical level of, and being surrounded by, spectators and others alike, the kind of single identification urged by the later affairs was quite impossible. Even the machinery, with all its impressiveness, takes on a quite different meaning in these earlier ballets, therefore:

> Aux prouesses de Francini pour la Ballet de la Delivrance de Renaud [1617], la rapidité des changements avait fait pousser des cris d'étonnement à un public transporté par l'originalité, la variété, la nouveauté, la splendeur des décorations et des costumes, la prolixité des effets de la machinerie. Mais alors la totalité du spectacle, malgré la scène du fond et ses perspectives, s'inclut encore dans les dispositions centrales du jeu et de l'audience - d'une audience qui se sait dans la même salle, les pieds sur le même plancher que les joueurs. Le spectacle ne se détache pas sur le 'plan du tableau,' sur le plan du cadre de scène, comme l'Orfeo de Torelli [1647], conforme au nouveau principe illusionniste. Les climats de participation, les comportements perspectifs ne sont pas les mêmes. (Villiers, op. cit., 24)

The ballet de cour naturally had it in its power to go much further than the regular theatre in creating a kind of total theatre. In gradually turning its back on those possibilities and evolving towards opéra and pièces à machines (whatever the precise connections), it reflects the preoccupations central to the development of the regular theatre. Once again, by its very nature, it could probably not go as far as that regular theatre, for it could never achieve complete vraisemblance.[1] Nonetheless, it goes far enough to allow us to determine that the development we have followed was not confined only to one level of the theatre.

NOTE

[1] See, for example, comments of Saint-Hubert, in *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets* (Paris: Targa, 1641), 7 -- quoted by Prunières, 132; those of the abbé de Pure, in *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux* (Paris: Michel Brunet, 1668), II, XI, 214 -- quoted by Fournel, II, 157; and those of le père Ménestrier, in *Des Ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théatre* (Paris: Guignard, 1682), 176 -- quoted by Fournel, II, 358.

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